PARACLESIS;

OR,

CONSOLATIONS

DEDUCED FROM

NATURAL and REVEALED RELIGION:

IN TWO DISSERTATIONS.

The First supposed to have been composed by CICERO; now rendered into English: The Last originally written

By THOMAS BLACKLOCK, D. D.

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M DCC LXVII.

MVSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM

CONSOLATION

FROM

NATURAL RELIGION.

By M. T. CICERO.

Rendered into ENGLISH

By THOMAS BLACKLOCK, D. D.

O vitæ philoſophia dux! ô virtutis indagatrix, expultrixque vitiorum! Quid non modo nos, ſed omnino vita hominum ſine te eſſe potuiſſet? Tu urbes peperiſti: tu diſſipatos homines in ſocietatem vitæ convocaſti: tu eos inter ſe, primò domiciliis, deinde conjugiis, tum literarum et vocum communione, junxiſti: tu inventrix legum, tu magiſtra morum et diſciplinæ, fuiſti: Ad te confugimus; a te opem petimus.

CICERO, Tuſcul. Quæſt.

TO

Mr JAMES BEATTIE,

PROFESSOR of MORALS in the Mariſchall College, ABERDEEN.

SIR,

THE following ſheets were written at a time when it became abſolutely neceſſary to lead my mind out of herſelf. Had I been ſo happy then as to have known you, or could have had an opportunity of converſing with you, it is more than probable, that neither the world nor you would have had the trouble of what is here offered. I am glad, however, of having it in my power, in this public manner, to teſtify my eſteem for a perſon, whoſe character in the literary world is ſo deſervedly

deſervedly diſtinguiſhed, and whoſe friendſhip, though a late acquiſition, I ſhall always reckon one of my moſt valuable. Give me leave here to return you, and the learned and reſpectable body of which you are a member, my warm acknowledgments for the late honour they conferred upon me. I am,

SIR,

With every ſentiment

EDINBURGH, Aug. 10. 1767. } of eſteem and regard

which friendſhip can inſpire,

your moſt humble ſervant,

THOMAS BLACKLOCK.

ERRATA.

Page viii. l. 16, 17. *for* preſence mind, *read* preſence of mind.
p. xiv. l. 3. *for perdu, read* perdue.
p. 11. l. 5. *for* all deſigns, *read* all his deſigns.
p. 29. l. 16. *for* men, *read* man.
p. 34. l. 21. *for* no, *read* not.
p. 151. l. 20, 21. *for* veneral, *read* venereal.

REMARKS

ON

The AUTHENTICITY of the CONSOLATION ſuppoſed to be written by CICERO; with the TRANSLATOR's Motives for rendering it into ENGLISH, and writing the DISSERTATIONS ſubjoined to it:

In a LETTER to a FRIEND.

DEAR SIR,

YOU aſk me, Whether I think the Conſolation now before you was really written by Cicero? what were my motives for tranſlating it? and why I wrote the treatiſe which is added, attempting to prove, that the afflictions of human life can be no where effectually conſoled, but in that account of the divine œconomy which is given us by our Saviour and his Apoſtles? To theſe queſtions I ſhall anſwer as diſtinctly and conciſely as poſſible. But let me firſt obſerve, that if the Conſolation merit your attention, it is of little importance, by what

author, or in what age, it was compoſed. The ſentiments which it contains, the examples which it propoſes, the deſign which it proſecutes, and the manner in which it is accompliſhed, are the only criterions by which the merit of the work can be fairly determined; and if it is found inadequate to the purpoſes for which it was intended, no name, however reſpectable, no authority, however venerable, ought to ſcreen it from the cenſure which it deſerves. Dr Middleton, in his life of the real or pretended author, without heſitation, pronounces it ſpurious; but ſeems to have imbibed that impreſſion from the critics, on whoſe opinion he forms his own; yet from their teſtimony, and that of others, he adds a plan of Cicero's Conſolation, minutely agreeable to the manuſcript now in your eye. Nor is it leſs certain, that the fragments of Cicero's treatiſe, contained in Lactantius, are to be found verbatim in the piece whoſe authenticity is now queſtioned. It is natural to imagine, that any original genius, in its attempts to execute the plan of another, would find itſelf miſerably fettered and circumſcribed in its excurſions. But if the original deſigner, beſides drawing the outlines, had added ſome particular paſſages upon the different topics which were to conſtitute

his

his piece, it ſhould ſeem entirely impracticable for his ſucceſſor and imitator to adapt theſe detached ſentences, and interweave them with his work, ſo that its texture and colouring might appear uniform, without being ridiculouſly variegated, like a piece of wretched patchwork, ſuch as Horace deſcribes:

Incœptis gravibus plerumquè et magna profeſſis,
Purpureus, latè qui ſplendeat, unus et alter
Aſſuitur pannus.———————————

When, pregnant with vaſt enterprize, the muſe
In boaſtful phraſe ſome arduous task purſues,
You here and there a purple patch may ſpy,
Whoſe glare, obſcurely diſtant, ſtrikes the eye.

But this, in my opinion, is far from being the caſe with the original Conſolation; for concerning the original I would always be underſtood, when I make obſervations of this kind. The fragments already mentioned are ſo naturally inſerted, ſo happily connected with what precedes and follows them, that the whole appears to reſult from the ſame uninterrupted current of invention, and to be regulated by the ſame taſte and genius. In a great many paſſages of the Conſolation, where the topics coincide with thoſe treated by Cicero in his dialogue *De contemptu mortis*, the reaſoning is preciſely the ſame, and the expreſſion almoſt iden-

tical. There are a number of ſentences, beſides the fragments preſerved in Lactantius, whoſe ſtructure is ſo much in the manner of Cicero, that no filial likeneſs can be more ſtriking. Yet muſt it be allowed, that if the Treatiſe on Conſolation be really Cicero's, it is leſs accurate, and leſs animated, than many of his other performances: even this however is not ſufficient to ſubvert its ligitimacy, becauſe we are well informed how deeply he was afflicted by the loſs of his Tullia. So ſevere, ſo permanent was his dejection, that he retired to a ſolitary villa, belonging to Pomponius Atticus, where, in the depth of umbrageous woods and immenſe foreſts, he muſed in mournful ſolitude, and deplored, with all a father's anguiſh, the abſent darling of his ſoul. It is true, that in an epiſtle to the proprietor of that receſs, where he had long indulged his woe, he endeavours to remove the ſuſpicion of his friends, who imagined his ſpirit irrecoverably depreſſed and broken in a ſeries of calamities, by urging, that he had neglected no duty, that he had been denied to no perſon who inquired for him, nor diſcovered, in any tranſaction, that irrevocable abſence, that unhappy confuſion of mind, which are the inſeparable concomitants of oppreſſive ſorrow. Still however, if we examine either

either his conduct, his epiſtles, or the ſentiments of his cotemporaries, we ſhall be apt to imagine, that theſe exertions of ſoul by which he regulated his actions, and preſerved his decorum, were violent and uncommon. Nor can we forbear to think, that, during the whole gloomy period, he maintained an inceſſant ſtruggle with nature, to keep her from ſinking beneath the inſupportable weight of her diſtreſs.

It may not perhaps be unacceptable to preſent you with a ſuccinct abſtract of a lady's life, who was ſo dear to her father, whoſe name he has tranſmitted to poſterity with ſuch veneration and tenderneſs in his epiſtles, and whoſe fate plunged him into that abyſs of grief, from whence he endeavoured to emerge, by exerting his mind for its own conſolation.

Tullia was born Auguſt the 5th; but in what year, it remains uncertain. She was firſt married to Caius Piſo, a man of great worth and honour, who intereſted himſelf in the affairs of his father-in-law with the moſt ſtrenuous activity, and who wanted neither ſpirit nor eloquence. It is thought that he expired during the baniſhment of Cicero, about the year of Rome 696. The following year Tullia was once more married to Furius Craſſipes. How

ſhe

ſhe was ſeparated from this huſband, whether by death or divorce, we cannot, at this period, determine: all we know is, that, in the year 703, ſhe was joined in matrimony with Cornelius Dolabella. This third alliance happened in the abſence of Cicero, who then governed the province of Cilicia. His friends, whoſe information with reſpect to the ſtate of Dolabella's affairs he had earneſtly intreated, were faithleſs or negligent in the diſcharge of that office; and he was afterwards touched with the moſt ſenſible regret, for conſenting to theſe nuptials, before he had explored with his own eyes the ſituation of Dolabella's fortune. This marriage was far from being eligible: The man was profligate in his manners, but at the ſame time ſo ingeniouſly wicked, that he effectually deluded both the mother and daughter, notwithſtanding his turbulent humour and diſſolute conduct, to perſuade themſelves that he might prove a ſuitable match. By the tumults which he excited in the city, whilſt he was tribune of the people, he wrung the ſoul of his father-in-law with a thouſand vexations. He wanted to eſtabliſh a law incompatible with juſtice, deſtructive of commerce, and pernicious to creditors; for he aſſerted, that neither perſonal impriſonment, nor confiſcation of effects, ſhould oblige debtors

to

to pay what they owed. And to ſuch a height was this ſedition fermented, that M. Antonius found it neceſſary to bring troops into the city, who attacked the abettors of this inſurgent, and killed to the number of 800. In this laſt marriage Tullia was moſt unhappy; nor can it be doubted, that her interview with her father at Brunduſium was chiefly intended to give her an opportunity of pouring out her ſoul before him, and of conſulting with him what meaſures were to be taken with a man, whoſe character rendered him the plague of domeſtic, and the curſe of public life. She procured a divorce from him; yet Cicero treated him with all poſſible delicacy, till after the murder of Trebonius, when he diſcharged upon him the whole artillery of his eloquence, with all the force which private injuries or patriot indignation could inſpire. In the year 708, depreſſed with her own, her family's, and her country's misfortunes, ſhe was ſeized with a languiſhing indiſpoſition, which ſucceeded her delivery, and cauſed that premature departure, ſo long and ſo pathetically lamented by her inconſolable father. Her extreme delicacy, univerſal benevolence, diſtinguiſhed piety, conſummate prudence, ſingular œconomy, indefatigable activity, profound learning, and exquiſite beauty,

are

are not merely ſupported by the partial evidence of parental fondneſs, but likewiſe tranſmitted to memory by authors who cannot be ſuſpected of thoſe prepoſſeſſions.

But careleſs and languid compoſition is not the ſole objection urged by the critics againſt this performance. They inſiſt, that the author has been moſt unhappy in ſelecting his examples of afflicted virtue. But had they regarded theſe examples in the ſame point of view with him, they would probably have diſcovered more candour and modeſty in their animadverſions. For it is obſerved in the tract itſelf, that many of thoſe perſons are not recommended as models of human perfection, but as experimental proofs, that it is practicable to retain preſence mind, to ſuppreſs the throbs of nature, even in the criſis of ſuffering, and to ſubdue the ſtrongeſt efforts of grief. Since, however, we have mentioned the Critics, it may not be improper to give you ſome notion of their ſpirit, and of the principles by which they would refute the authenticity of this performance.

The cry was firſt opened againſt it by Antonius Riccobonus, who informs us, That when a Conſolation, under the name of Cicero, had been publiſhed, having read it, and ſuſpected its authenticity, he wrote his opinion

of

of it to Hieronymus Mercurialis, at his own requeſt; in which he thinks it ſo far from being genuine, that whether he regarded the ſentiments or the ſtyle, it was neither conſonant with the character, nor like the compoſitions of Cicero; and therefore not only ſuppoſititious, but a moſt injudicious fiction. This letter being publiſhed, Carolus Sigonius endeavoured to refute his conjectures in two orations, which, with copies of his own letters, he ſent him, written in Italian.

After this follows the letter from Sigonius, with an anſwer from Riccobonus. Sigonius aſſerts, that he thought the Conſolation Cicero's, becauſe it could be written by no modern. The reſt of theſe two epiſtles contain only a diſpute concerning Ariſtotle's Rhetoric, of which both of them had publiſhed tranſlations, and were conſequently competitors for fame; but with this we have nothing to do.

To theſe ſucceed M. A. Muretus's letter to Riccobonus, and a great many others both to himſelf and different correſpondents; but they contain no more than general aſſertions, and can only be regarded as the mere ſuffrages or authorities of ſo many men.

It were endleſs to repeat the various altercations which paſſed between Sigonius and his literary antagoniſt, in a long intercourſe of

letters; particularly as neither of them enter into the merits of the cauſe, but content themſelves with mutual animadverſions, in which they obliquely upbraid each other with want of candour and unfairneſs of conduct. Riccobonus in particular affirms, that Sigonius, after having declared himſelf entirely ignorant how the Conſolation made its way into the world, could be proved to have introduced it; and further adds, that Franciſcus Vianellus had affirmed to him, in the preſence of many indiſputable witneſſes, that Sigonius had intruſted the book to his hands for publication, and that he had actually conveyed it to the world. As the warmth of his temper increaſes by its motion, and by the numerous and potent auxiliaries who adopted his ſentiments, he repeats the charge with augmented ardour. "In "my letter to Mercurialis, and in my three "former diſſertations, I have not only proved, "that the author of the Conſolation muſt be "void of literature, and even entirely igno- "rant of Cicero; but likewiſe in my fourth, "to which Sigonius has not vouchſafed the "leaſt reply, I have ſhown, that he is not poſ- "ſeſſed of common ſenſe, and in ſeveral places "contradictory to himſelf; that he is entirely "ignorant of logics, from the weak and abſurd

concluſions

" concluſions which he draws; that he is quite
" unſkilled in ancient hiſtory, from his groſs
" diſarrangement and miſapplication of the
" times and events concerning which he
" treats, and from the weakneſs he diſcovers
" in exploring the monuments of antiquity;
" and that he is not only diſſimilar to Cicero in
" every thing, but even an abſolute novice in
" grammar. Sigonius however contents him-
" ſelf with anſwering my former conjectures,
" without beſtowing one ſtricture upon my ſuc-
" ceeding arguments, and only offering that
" apology for his violated promiſe of writing
" no more againſt me, which I have tranſlated
" into Latin."

THAT the author of the Conſolation is unjuſtly accuſed, as being generally illiterate, and ignorant of Cicero in particular, the treatiſe itſelf, and ſome of my preceding obſervations, are ſufficient to demonſtrate. The want of common ſenſe, and palpable inconſiſtency with which he is upbraided, are imputations no leſs injurious and virulent. There are indeed ſome paſſages which, to a ſuperficial and prejudiced eye, may appear contradictory; as when he firſt ſeems to argue, that there is no ſenſibility in death, and afterwards, with equal warmth, defends the immortality of the ſoul. But

theſe are by no means incompatible; ſince, in the firſt poſition, he includes the complex frame of man, as compoſed of ſoul and body, which, in that comprehenſive view, will be univerſally allowed not to ſuffer after its diſſolution: In the laſt he aſſerts, that the pure and unimbodied ſpirit ſtill ſurvives, and continues ſuſceptible of painful or pleaſing impreſſions. But though theſe propoſitions ſhould be granted irreconcilably diſſonant, there is reaſon to fear that the ſame objection will lie with equal force againſt the dialogue *De contemptu mortis*, where the argument is conducted in a manner preciſely ſimilar to this. Again, it is not denied by our author, that the paroxiſms of a dying frame are expreſſive of pain, but merely hinted, that, from theſe expreſſions, we may imagine much greater agony than is felt.

It was not neceſſary, either for the illuſtration or embelliſhment of his work, that he ſhould have mentioned the perſons and events which it contains, in the ſame ſeries and order of time when they occurred. Such a procedure would have been more like a pedantical annaliſt, than a philoſopher, and an orator. How theſe hiſtorical anecdotes are applied, and whether his concluſions are logically drawn, you muſt judge for yourſelf. If the virtuoſo who compoſed

poſed this formidable indictment was capable of detecting the author in ſuch a number of obvious grammatical blunders, his ſkill in philology muſt have been ſuperior either to his honeſty or good-nature. Inexpreſſible and incomprehenſible is the loſs which the republic of letters muſt have ſuſtained, when all-devouring time ſwallowed, in his relentleſs vortex, the faithful depoſitories of this momentous controverſy: Yet this, I fear, has been their fate; for though I have ſought both for the pieces mentioned by Antonius, and for another on the ſame ſubject, written by Joannes Guilielminus, with as much diligence as if they had deſerved to be read, yet they have hitherto eluded my keeneſt ſcrutiny. Sentiments of J. Lipſius, however, ſhall immediately follow theſe, who writes thus to Chriſtopher Plantinus:

"I HAVE ſeen, my dear Plantinus, a new-
"coined book, which Italy ſubſtitutes as a pro-
"duct of antiquity. Do you aſk what is my o-
"pinion of it? I ſee nothing in it, except the
"title, which can attract the reader; for Cicero
"is named as its ſuppoſed author. Induced by
"this very circumſtance, I can truly ſay, that I
"read it with avidity. But at my firſt peruſal
"it diſpleaſed me; a ſecond rendered it contemp-
"tible.

"tible. But who is this mock-orator, this "mincing Momus, who hoped that he could lie "*perdu* under the ſhade of a character ſo vene- "rable? Surely he muſt have formed a wretched "idea of our age. For what can be more unlike "the pure gold of Cicero, than this ſaturnine "compoſition? He has not even talents to con- "ſtitute him the ape of Cicero; not a feature, "not a manner the ſame. In his plan and inven- "tion, he has ſelected the moſt trite and com- "mon ſentiments; in his phraſeology, the imita- "tion is childiſh and deſpicable. Nowhere is "there any thing of nerve or ſpirit; not even the "complexion of his original has he been able to "copy, with all his clumſy-daubing of varniſh "and falſe colour. But would you have me ex- "plore it a little deeper, to preſerve our young "ſtudents from the illuſion? We muſt however "be ſhort; for once more to read it over, or even "to pay it the compliment of a curſory glance, "is a penance which I have neither patience nor "fortitude to endure.

"The introduction itſelf is detached and in- "conſiſtent; and in the turn of his periods the "members are intolerably diſproportioned and "diſtorted; a vice peculiar to himſelf, and dif- "fuſed through the whole piece."

To theſe general obſervations, our exquiſite critic

critic has added ſevere ſtrictures upon particular paſſages; ſome againſt the impropriety of the language, others againſt the compoſition: but I ſhould be ſorry to injure his memory by expoſing his ignorance, ill-nature, and vanity, in rehearſing them. Yet to give you a taſte of his talents, we ſhall add one or two of them.

THE author of the Conſolation ſpeaking of his country, adds, "That he would willingly have "purchaſed its freedom at the expence of his "deareſt blood." Upon which Lipſius remarks, with equal triumph and felicity, "That he "might have ſpared himſelf the vaſt expence "of this expenſive phraſe."

THE ſame perſon recapitulating the evils to which man is obnoxious, adds, "It is won-"derful, that thus involved in calamities, he "ſhould not abandon himſelf to deſpair." Upon which take the learned animadverſion of Lipſius, "It would be wonderful (ſays he) if you "paid the leaſt attention either to yourſelf or "your words; but it is ſtill more wonderful "that I do not abandon you."

SPEAKING of the departed lady, for whoſe loſs he endeavours to conſole himſelf, he adds, "That ſhe had deſerved the higheſt acknowledg-"ments from him, and from her country." Here Lipſius is in a mighty rage. Pregnant with the idea

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of a blundering ſchool-boy, his hand ſeems to itch for the rod, that he might take immediate vengeance. "Is this (ſays he) ſuitable "to a female character? Did Tullia merit the "higheſt praiſes from her country? What! "Tullia, Tullia indeed! Begone boy."

THERE is only one more which merits our attention. In the Conſolation it is aſſerted, That a temple has been vowed and dedicated to Tullia. "Vowed (ſays the critic) if you "pleaſe, but never dedicated; for it is not "eaſy to conſecrate an edifice before it is built." Yet when Cicero's imagination was warmly intereſted in the ſubject, there can be no great abſurdity in thinking that he ſpoke by anticipation, and ſuppoſed already done what he immediately intended to do. Had he been engaged in ſome cool and diſpaſſionate reſearch of philoſophy, the obſervation might have had ſome force; but when the circumſtances of the author are conſidered, it may ſtill be queſtioned, whether this ſtart of ſenſibility is ſufficient to refute the authenticity of a work, written upon the ſame plan, and containing the ſame ſentiments with that of Cicero. Before we have done with this oſtentatious critic, it may be worth our pains to obſerve the ſenti-

ments

ments of his cotemporaries concerning his own compoſitions.

PHILLIPUS PAREUS, a man who was extremely ſkilled in Roman literature, thought he did his father much honour in publiſhing the contempt he had diſcovered for that new and deſultory ſtyle which Lipſius had exhibited to the public. "He had (ſays Pareus) a ſove-"reign contempt for that new form of expreſ-"ſion which Juſtus Lipſius, otherwiſe a man "of conſideration, has obtruded upon our age, "and which the ſervile herd of imitators have "ſtrenuouſly attempted to copy, but with un-"equal ſucceſs."

HE likewiſe relates the opinions of Jacobus Pontanus and Marcus Velſerus, upon the ſame ſtyle.

"WE admire (ſay they) and applaud the "excellent genius, and conſummate learning of "J. Lipſius; nor do we find any who has bet-"ter deſerved our acknowledgments in literary "reſearches: yet from the numberleſs ſoleciſms, "and affected heterodoxy of his diction, for "many and important cauſes, as I think, we "fly with abhorrence." I have heard with my own ears M. Velſerus acknowledging the warmeſt friendſhip for Lipſius, yet he would rather chuſe to follow Muretus than Lipſius in writing. So highly did he admire the genius and

erudition of this author, whilſt, at the ſame time, he juſtly deteſted his unprecedented, unnatural, and affected ſtyle. Laſtly, he adds, that Scaliger, when juſt ready to expire, diſcovered his averſion at this oſtentatiouſly-laboured manner of expreſſion; who now, in the laſt ſtruggles of departing life, (when writing, as Hyenſius ſays, to Iſaac Caſaubon), inveighed, with peculiar bitterneſs, againſt this wretched habit, this new corruption of language. For thus Hyenſius writes concerning him: "He "was accuſtomed violently to condemn the "affectation of J. Lipſius in his ſtyle, particu-"larly in theſe works which were the products "of his advanced life; and he often read his "letters with indignation; in which I know, "for certain, that his opinion agreed with "your own."

THUS having delineated the opinions of the Critics againſt the authenticity of the Conſolation, ſo far as they occurred to me; and having likewiſe ſhown what regard they appear to deſerve, let me only add, that though the tranſlation was never intended for a ſervile and literal verſion, it has yet been executed with as much fidelity as poſſible. But my chief care has been, not to preſerve the phraſeology and idioms of the original, but to transfuſe, as naturally and eaſily as

I could, the ſpirit and ſentiments of the author into Engliſh: How ſucceſsful this attempt has proved, it is yours to determine.

HAVE I not now quite exhauſted your patience? or do you ſtill inſiſt that your laſt queſtions ſhall be categorically anſwered? If ſo, let me inform you, that my motive both for tranſlating the firſt, and writing the laſt treatiſe on Conſolation, was to ſupport my own mind, which, for a number of years, beſides its literary difficulties, and its natural diſadvantages, had maintained an inceſſant conflict with fortune. It was therefore to alleviate the preſſure of repeated diſappointments, to ſooth my anguiſh for the loſs of departed friends, to elude the rage of implacable and unprovoked enemies, that I endeavoured to abſtract my mind from a ſituation which, at that time, appeared equally wretched and hopeleſs. For thus, whilſt my conſtitution was almoſt irrecoverably ſhocked by a rapid ſucceſſion of ſevere misfortunes, I kept my internal powers awake and active, without either languiſhing to inſipidity, or precipitantly ruſhing to deſpair. But finding all the aids of unaſſiſted reaſon too weak to ſtem the torrent of evils which threatened to overwhelm me, I felt it neceſſary to explore a quicker relief, whoſe o-

perations might be more powerful, and whoſe baſis might be more ſolid. In this view, the Chriſtian religion expanded all the treaſure of her benignity to my afflicted heart: As a ſolitary traveller, wandering through the burning ſands of Lybia, ſurveys at length a cool and limpid ſtream to quench the intolerable fever of his thirſt; ſuch was the heavenly proſpect preſented to my bewildered ſoul. I approached, I taſted, I was in a great meaſure reſtored. Thus bleſſed with chearful acquieſcence in the general deſtiny of things, and in my own in particular, it was natural for me to wiſh, that others who felt the ſame diſeaſe, might participate the ſame remedy; and to flatter myſelf, that ſuch conſiderations as had produced this agreeable change in my own heart and underſtanding, might, in ſome degree, operate a ſimilar effect upon others. The reaſon why this diſcourſe was modelled as it now appears, will not protract your attention much longer. I had a view of ſelecting a ſociety of young gentlemen, in a particular place where I reſided for ſome time, that I might ſtimulate their intellectual powers in purſuit of truth, and prepoſſeſs their young hearts in favour of religion: though this deſign proved abortive, yet I finiſhed the diſcourſe which was intended to be delivered to them,

them, and now conſign both to the world as you ſee them. What reception they may find from taſte and learning, is neither within the ſphere of my knowledge, nor the object of my concern. If theſe imperfect eſſays are in the leaſt ſucceſsful, in ſoothing the pangs of diſtreſs, in directing the anxious reſearches of underſtanding, in confirming the peace, or improving the piety of an ingenuous heart, theſe effects will amply reward the labours of

Your moſt obedient

and moſt humble ſervant.

EDINBURGH, Aug. 26.
1767.

CONSO-

CONSOLATION

OF

HUMAN LIFE,

Suppoſed to be written by CICERO, upon the Loſs of a DAUGHTER.

THOUGH the wiſe forbid the application of remedies to the mind when hurt by recent misfortunes; and though, in human life, no event, however adverſe, ſhould appear ſurpriſing or unexpected; yet let me try (if by any means I can) to cure myſelf, and ſupport my own mind, while tenderly ſenſible of a domeſtic calamity. For if, as often as they happen in the courſe of things, we naturally endeavour to conſole the misfortunes of others, why may we not apply the ſame lenitives to our own? And if we have ſuſtained thoſe evils with ſome degree of patience and dignity, which human efforts could neither avoid nor prevent; why ſhould we not, if poſſible, by a proper application of our rational powers, render ſuch afflictions more tolerable?

particularly

particularly ſince men ought to exert themſelves with greater vigour and aſſiduity in removing every anxiety and vexation, in proportion as a life of tranquillity is preferable to diſturbance and care; at leaſt, ſuch a conduct muſt be more eligible, than for one depreſſed with torment, or involved in miſery, to make human life, (though ſufficiently wretched of itſelf) ſtill more miſerable, by inconveniencies which do not neceſſarily attend it. Beſides, what can be more excellent, what more uſeful, than, when the corporeal frame is found in a proper ſtate, to endeavour that the mind may likewiſe preſerve her native tranquillity and force? For if the mind be neceſſary to the body as director, ſuch is the body to the mind as an inſtrument. But the mind when diſturbed is far from being in a condition to govern, and the body when diſordered is by no means qualified to obey her commands: The learned and wiſe therefore, who have formerly written againſt the immoderate indulgence of ſorrow, may be juſtly admired, both for the prudence of their undertaking, and the humanity of its execution.

Of theſe benevolent ſages many pieces are ſtill extant, juſtly valued for the wiſdom of their compoſitions; particularly thoſe of Theophraſtus, Xenocrates, and Crantor; whoſe books were

were ſo full of ſalutary precepts, and whoſe ſtyle ſo correct and happy, that though I often took them in my hand, at firſt only to ſooth my mind, admiration of theſe fine qualities, together with the ſmarting ſenſe of a domeſtic calamity, at laſt irreſiſtibly led me to read them. For the misfortune of having loſt a daughter, whoſe lovely image was for ever impreſſed on my view, (as wiſdom and virtue conſpired to adorn her with every thing that was laudable), ſo much ſtruck, or rather ſo much afflicted me, that in order to ſooth or mitigate my grief, it became neceſſary to have recourſe to thoſe for aſſiſtance, whoſe learning and authority had before been moſt prevalent with me. It is therefore my deſign, to collect from them ſuch ſentiments as appear either wiſely conceived or elegantly expreſſed, that by theſe my regret may be ſoftened; that if I cannot allay the ſame uneaſineſs in others, which I have ſometimes before attempted both in ſpeaking and writing, perhaps not without ſucceſs, yet theſe efforts may prove, in ſome meaſure, effectual to myſelf. And in this enterpriſe I ſhall exert greater fortitude than others, who, entirely free from affliction themſelves, find it leſs difficult to comfort the miſerable, and reſtore them to chearfulneſs. For thus I, though

deeply affected in my own heart, ſhall by that very exertion of mind, which is found neceſſary in purſuing conſolation for myſelf, conquer the grief which I endeavour to ſooth, and, by changing the object of my attention, impreſs that force upon nature which is requiſite to overcome her reſiſtance, and change her bias. And I wiſh theſe attempts may be ſo effectual, as to teach others, in ſimilar circumſtances, how they may bear adverſity with patience.

THIS, the oftener it happens, muſt be reckoned ſo much more incident to human nature, nay almoſt created with us, and neceſſarily implied in our frame and circumſtances, which ought to render it more ſupportable. For if any one acknowledges himſelf to be a member of the human ſyſtem, and claims the appellation of *man*, how ſhould he dare to refuſe the conditions and accidents natural to his ſpecies? Such a conduct would immediately ſubject him to the imputation both of folly and injuſtice. This topic is ingeniouſly and politely treated by Theophraſtus, as well as Xenocrates, both of whom accuſe of folly and injuſtice ſuch as diſcover impatience at the ordinary contingencies of life; and one of them, without ſcruple, pronounces ſuch characters adverſe to the Gods themſelves. The crime implied

implied in this behaviour is atrocious, and ſcarce tolerable in a man, who may be juſtly eſteemed, like the giants, to rebel againſt Heaven, if, inſtead of gratitude to the immortal Gods for all favours, from whom he poſſeſſes exiſtence, activity, and reaſon, he ſhall proudly oppoſe their will, and accuſe their adminiſtration.

But theſe things, as I have already ſaid, are judiciouſly treated by a great number. I chuſe however to follow Crantor, whoſe ſhort, but truly valuable diſſertation, I have read; which, according to Panætius, ſhould be repeated verbatim; and in which, every remedy againſt grief is perſpicuouſly and elegantly comprehended. He has enumerated the misfortunes of human nature with ſo much diligence and accuracy, that one would imagine mankind born, and introduced to their preſent ſcene of exiſtence, that, by ſufferings, they might atone for the crimes of ſome former ſtate.

For ſuppoſe mankind born and introduced to the preſent theatre, immediately you ſhall recogniſe, not the original of a being intended to poſſeſs and govern inferior natures, but of one deſtined to be the ſlave of every inconveniency and miſery. For in every period while the infant riſes to the boy, his hours are con-

ſumed in tears, complaints, tenderneſs, impotence of mind and body, with a thouſand other pains and hardſhips.

In youth we are ſeized with a feveriſh ardour peculiar to that ſeaſon, neither capable of reaſon nor reflection; ſpurning with contempt every thing that is beneficial or praiſe-worthy; eager in purſuit of ſenſitive pleaſure, and frequently of the moſt ſordid vices; ignorant of real good; cruel to equals, impatient of ſuperiors, and inſulting to thoſe of lower rank: from whence flow competitions, altercations, affronts, and, in ſhort, an uninterrupted ſeries of vexations. From contempt of honourable purſuits, ariſe miſery and infamy; from ſordid enjoyments, greedily purſued and attained, ſpring pains, diſeaſes, and, in fine, eternal ſelf-diſapprobation, aggravated by an intolerable ſenſe of thoſe bitter conſequences that inevitably attend guilt and baſeneſs. Add to theſe, a mad prodigality of money, careleſſneſs of futurity, forgetfulneſs of want, indifference to the welfare of children, of wives, of family, and poſterity.

If any one would call theſe *the vices of that immature age*, rather than *the misfortunes of nature*, he will not, by diſputing the propriety of a name, change the ſtate of things, nor re-

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move theſe very evils or uneaſineſſes from mankind. Neither muſt we liſten to him, who would ſeparate theſe from the misfortunes natural to our frame, becauſe they are only the errors of individuals, or at moſt of a few; whereas he affirms nothing natural to man, unleſs what is eſſential to all the particulars of the kind. As if truly anger were not natural to man, becauſe there are ſome who ſeem not to reſent; and as if ſocial intercourſe and converſation were unnatural, becauſe there are numbers found, who do nothing with more reluctance, than entering into company and interchanging diſcourſe. But they will appear plainly miſeries natural to man, if we only conſider, that though all of them are not found in any one; yet certainly they are all recogniſed in the ſpecies, ſome of them in a great many, and frequently a number of them in the ſame perſon.

AGAIN, in our more fixed ſtate of life, it is not difficult to underſtand, but ſcarce practicable to particularize, either the different kinds or quantities of miſery to which we are ſubjected. For this, of all the ſtages that complete the life of man, is moſt obnoxious to diſturbing paſſions, to imminent dangers, to the loſs of fame and fortune. Becauſe as this, amongſt

mongſt all the other periods of our life, is the fitteſt and moſt proper both for tranſacting private affairs and public negotiations; ſo this alone, in a degree ſuperior to all the reſt, partakes, if not ſuſtains, the whole aggregate of pains and perplexities, which ariſe either from the adminiſtration of public or private buſineſs. It is now that we engage in the ſervice of our friends; it is now that we are inveſted with offices of ſtate; it is now that we acquire glory and advantage from the proſperous iſſue of our affairs, or are involved in calamity and diſturbance by their ill ſucceſs. It is the taſk of theſe years to defend and patroniſe ſuch members of the community as merit its regard; it is likewiſe their taſk to accuſe and depreſs ſuch as deſerve its animadverſion. On theſe years deſcend the effects of emulation and jealouſy, even from men of ſome deſert; and on theſe years, the deſigning and perfidious practiſe their fraud, and inflict their malice. It is an age always hoſtile to itſelf, always involved in tumult, always oppreſſed with labour, always tormented with anxiety and ſolicitude; an age which, if it had not at leaſt ſome few intervals of advantage and pleaſure, would neither be capable of regulating its conduct, nor ſupporting its pain.

BUT the number of its miſeries is ſtill much greater; ſo great indeed, that they are ſufficient to deter any man from public negotiations. Of this my late calamity afforded a moſt conſpicuous example to the whole ſtate; a calamity in which I was involved for procuring and aſcertaining the ſafety of my country, for defending every ſacred and civil right, for reſcuing the Roman commonwealth and people when a prey to traitors and murderers. But the unhappineſs was mine; my countrymen obtained ſecurity and reſt, which, had it been neceſſary, I would have purchaſed with chearfulneſs at the expence of my deareſt blood.—— But I need not here expatiate on any thing to my own commendation. This, however, truth permits me to affirm, that in theſe years which were ſpent in procuring any conſiderable utility or embelliſhment to my country, in theſe I truly lived. And if my life were ſtill protracted, no other cauſe, but my regard and care to promote public happineſs, could induce me to continue it; for the love of public happineſs is the moſt glorious and laudable ſentiment that can adorn a rational creature.

AND now why ſhould I enumerate the pains and infirmities of old age, the lateſt period of human life? The word itſelf, which implies

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the whole idea of ſickneſs and vexation, the very ſight of an old man, ſufficiently diſcover how numerous and ſevere the torments and uneaſineſſes are which attend that helpleſs ſtate. For what other notion do we naturally feel from the view of an old man, trembling, weak, and infirm, covered with hoary hairs, and reclining beneath the preſſure of age; what but the idea of a miſerable creature, dead to all the enjoyments of life, and alive to all the agonies of death? And though old age may appear to ſome as deriving no ſmall conſolation from its prudence acquired by former experience, which indeed is its peculiar characteriſtic; yet theſe very perſons muſt confeſs, that a number of the griefs and diſeaſes attending old men flow natively from the ſame ſource. For will not any one who finds himſelf prudent and ſkilful in tranſacting affairs, naturally regret the weakneſs of that age, which prevents his accompliſhing, in the beſt manner, what he ſo well underſtands? And if he is paſſionately fond of his country, will he not feel real anguiſh, that he cannot proſecute its glory and advantage, as well in ſcenes of active life, as in thoſe of counſel and deliberation? The uneaſineſs of wiſe men is likewiſe much increaſed, by their conſciouſneſs that the moſt ſalutary plans can

have

have no good effect, unleſs conducted in the propereſt manner to their iſſue; and that unleſs his inſtruments be men of wiſdom and probity, men whoſe darling object is the intereſt of their country, all deſigns will prove vain and abortive.

THESE obſervations on the different periods of life ſeem ſufficient. What then ſhall I ſay of its different ranks? Or can it be denied, that infelicity is equally diſtributed amongſt the higheſt, middle, and loweſt ſtations?

FOR how unhappy even kings themſelves muſt be, to what fatigues, fears, anxieties, and ſnares they are obnoxious, Dionyſius ſufficiently ſhowed, when he cauſed Damocles to try how far his fortune deſerved emulation, with a ſword impending over his neck. Nor is it ſurpriſing, whilſt they are threatened with all the diſtreſſes of war, the devaſtation of their territories, the ſlaughter of their ſubjects, and the deſtruction of their cities. Theſe events, when they happen, always add ſomething to the glory or dominion of the conqueror; but the conſequence is generally ſo much deſtruction and expence, that the victory is more than balanced by the loſs; and, for the moſt part, both the contending powers would have found it better not to have taken arms. But if a re-

pulſe of the army, or any defeat, ſhould happen, nothing can be conceived more unhappy than ſuch a ſituation; ſince it is joined with captivity, ſorrow, ſcorn, and want. But ſuppoſe a king, free from all the attacks and hardſhips of war, poſſeſſing his own realm in a pacific manner, and undiſturbed by hoſtile incurſions, is he in this caſe ſafer, or more exempt from uneaſineſs? No; for even human nature itſelf is impatient of eaſe, and ingenious to find out imaginary cauſes of anxiety and diſquiet. Thus he ſhall either be forming projects to augment the taxes, to enlarge his dominions, to reduce new cities under authority, or to contract alliances and friendſhips with more formidable powers. Whoever revolves theſe ſchemes in his mind, can neither be eaſy himſelf, nor ſuffer others to enjoy ſecurity and reſt. But concerning avarice, the greateſt plague of the human mind, I would not chuſe to enlarge at preſent; a plague which is particularly prevalent in ſouls reſigned to ſloth and inactivity, on which account, it is moſt diſturbing to the minds of thoſe in higher ſphere and ſuperior dignity.

To this ſtation we may oppoſe the loweſt rank of mankind: becauſe as, in the general opinion, they are mean and obſcure; ſo, in reality

reality, they are expoſed to all kinds of calamity and pain. On them are accumulated the miſeries of poverty, hunger, ſcorn, inſult, ſevere taxes, and the toils of war: nay, on them ſuch evils deſcend with redoubled weight and bitterneſs; becauſe when others are depreſſed by adverſe fortune, they can divert or conſole it a thouſand ways denied to perſons in low life. Beſides, they are placed by nature, whoſe laws operate here like a kind of fatal neceſſity, in a ſituation ſo unhappily obſcure, that though expoſed to every inconvenient or painful accident, they have almoſt no recourſe, by which they may ſupport their deſtiny, or riſe above it.

Nor are theſe of middle ſtation exempt from diſtreſſes: For, placed between the higheſt and the loweſt, it is ſubſervient to the one, and obnoxious to the other; to which, if its ſuperiority were greater, it would be more remote from vexation. But becauſe the diſtance between it and the ſubordinate rank is very little, and becauſe it is unequal in force and dignity to the higheſt order, it muſt remain contented within its own limits. Theſe therefore endure a great many hardſhips in the ſtate, ſuch as perhaps may promote its welfare in general, and are at the ſame time not quite intolerable; yet are

they ſufficient to vex the mind, and aggravate the woes of human life. It is not conſiſtent with my preſent deſign to purſue theſe things at greater length; they are all plain to every one's obſervation, and, from repeated experience, particularly known and felt by myſelf.

SUCH likewiſe is the condition of women: For they are haraſſed, if not with the ſame pains and difficulties, at leaſt with others little different. They are liable to the ſame corporeal diſeaſes, the ſame diſturbances of mind, and the ſame imperfection of reaſon with men; and ſo much the more unhappy is their ſituation, as the delicacy and ſoftneſs of their nature render them more incapable, either to repell adverſe occurrences, or to endure affliction. They are deeply impreſſed with the ſame ſenſe of ſorrow and regret which men feel from the loſs of parents, brothers, ſiſters, or other allies. They are often joined in a deſpotic manner to huſbands, whoſe folly, negligence, or prodigality, proves the misfortune of their lives, and the ruin of their families. And the preſſure of theſe evils is the more intenſe, that they cannot, like men, inveſtigate the moſt proper remedies, and apply them to the exigencies of their affairs. How much bitterneſs and uneaſineſs did my dear Tullia feel from the baniſhment of her father!

father! how much for the troubles and embaraſſments of thoſe to whom ſhe was joined in marriage! And tho' her life was not imbittered with a great number of diſagreeable events; yet, according to the judgment even of the moſt learned, the ſenſe of a few misfortunes may ſometimes afflict good and virtuous minds in an equal or ſuperior degree to others, whoſe advantages have been more numerous and ſtriking. There are beſides a conſiderable number of indiſpoſitions attending women, which it is much better to ſuppreſs than repeat; but this ſingle circumſtance ſufficiently diſcovers the extent of their wretchedneſs, that, during their whole lives, they are held almoſt in implicit ſubjection: For, while virgins, they muſt obey the commands of parents and friends; and, when wives, they muſt be ſubſervient to a huſband's will. Thus their ſituation is more intolerable, as leſs free; nor do they ever obtain liberty till they loſe life. So that they ſhould be alone pronounced happy in death; nor do I ſee what elſe can be more properly ſaid.——But to return to myſelf:

He who is married, beſides the ordinary vexations of life, is depreſſed with another and peculiar ſpecies of miſery; ſince he does not ſuffer for himſelf alone, but enlarges the ſphere of

of his cares and afflictions, by participating thoſe of his wife and family; for he cannot ſo much as in thought and imagination conceive himſelf diſtinct from her to whom he is united in matrimony, the moſt intimate and inviolable of all human connections. What therefore can the ſoul of man project or undertake, which is either excellent or glorious, whilſt agitated by ſuch misfortunes, and encompaſſed with ſo much diſtreſs? We ought to be more ſurpriſed, that it does not throw itſelf away, and, quite abandoned to deſpair, ſink in darkneſs and obſcurity.

I RETURN therefore to my firſt poſition, That none who breath enjoy immunity from pain and ſorrow; none are truly happy. And theſe perſons diſcover very little wiſdom, who ſuppoſing man born, by his ſufferings, to atone for his crimes, dare to imagine ſuch a ſituation compatible with bleſs or happineſs. For what we erroneouſly call *life*, is in reality death; nor can the ſoul ever enjoy real life, till, freed from theſe corporeal fetters, it can boaſt eternal liberty. Hence it is ſaid, that death has been conferred as a benefit by the immortal Gods on their peculiar favourites.

THUS we are told by Herodotus, that when the Argive prieſteſs importuned the tutelar goddeſs

goddeſs of that city for the higheſt degree of happineſs to her ſons, ſhe found them ſoon afterwards dead: Death, therefore, was granted them as the beſt bleſſing. Should we believe Apollo, when ſupplicated by Trophonius and Agamedes, who had built him a magnificent temple at Delphi, that he would indulge them with that bleſſing which afforded greateſt happineſs to man, we might be led to the ſame concluſion, ſince three days afterwards they were found both dead. From which gift it appears, that by the divination of a god, a god to whom the reſt had freely reſigned the exerciſe of that art, death is the beſt bleſſing which Heaven can beſtow on man. Therefore the falſe opinion, that death is an evil, (which many indulge), is, in ſound philoſophy, exploded, and entirely eradicated; ſince even by the deciſion of Heaven, it is not only free from evil, but the greateſt favour, the moſt excellent gift which the Deities can beſtow on mankind: Excellent indeed; for in death we find the final period of our former miſeries, and a certain refuge from thoſe future diſaſters, which others, who have not finiſhed the career of life, muſt encounter.

We have inſtances of a great many in our country, diſtinguiſhed for goodneſs and fortitude, who, by protracting life, have ſuffered incredible

incredible afflictions. Some will ſay, they were undeſerved, and ought not therefore to be called *miſeries*; for there can be no miſery but in guilt. Of this we ſhall inquire elſewhere. But calamities they certainly were; of which even the tranſient and fleeting idea, that only ſtrikes the fancy and flies away, gives a bitter and diſagreeable feeling, not to mention the permanent and corroſive impreſſion itſelf. From which we may conclude with certainty, that the Thracians acted wiſely, whoſe cuſtom it was, (if we may believe Herodotus), to deplore their children when born, but to rejoice and exult when they died. For they conſidered the concluſion of life as the end of ſorrows, and the harbour of eternal reſt; but, with reluctant eyes, they viewed its beginning as the entrance to grief and trouble.

If therefore it is our miſery to be born, and our happineſs to die, who would wiſh to be numbered with the ſons of men? Since the condition of his rank is to groan beneath oppreſſive miſery, who would not rather chuſe in death to find the true felicity and enjoyment of his being? And if we would prefer this as the nobleſt acquiſition for ourſelves, why ſhould we differ ſo widely in our ſenſe of what is good for our children, or other relatives? Would we wiſh to be

be in a better ſtate ourſelves, than thoſe who are the darling objects of our ſouls; or rather, would we chuſe to enjoy the moſt conſummate happineſs, and, at the ſame time, deſire that they ſhould be excruciated with pain and ſorrow? This ſurely can never be.

SINCE therefore this is the true eſtimate of death, it ought ever to be chearfully welcomed by all, not only when approaching themſelves, but ſuch as are moſt dear to them. And if death be more eligible to any, it muſt be chiefly ſo to thoſe, who having become conſpicuous by a life ſpent in the exerciſe of virtue, and who having lived ſo long here as deſtiny permits to human nature, can loſe nothing by changing the ſcene.

I KNOW not truly to whom birth can be thought an advantage; for what is there agreeable or chearful in the proſpect of a ſenſative being entering into pain and uneaſineſs? why ſhould it not rather ſhock us? which indeed would ſeem to be the caſe, from the moving plaints and wailings of new-born infants; for theſe are inſpired by Nature, our moſt wiſe and amiable parent, who never does any thing in vain, but rather, in all her productions, exhibits ſome admirable token of the goodneſs, wiſdom, and juſtice of her intentions. Whence

it is plain, that to be born, is by no means a very eligible event, nor to be daſhed among thoſe rocks that every where occur in life. But when we are born, the next thing to be deſired is the moſt ſudden death, that thus we may have an opportunity of flying, as it were, from flames, or inundations, or, what is ſtill more dreadful, from the viciſſitudes of fortune.

THE ſtory which is told of Silenus (if a ſubject ſo grave will admit an inſtance of ſo much levity) confirms the ſame thing; who being taken by Midas, recovered his freedom by his learning; for he taught the king, that it was beſt never to be born, but, when born, the next advantage within the reach of his deſires, was the moſt inſtant death. The ſame thing appears from the teſtimony of Euripides, a poet of great wiſdom. But my favourite Crantor tells us, that a father, impatient of the death of his ſon, obtained as an anſwer from thoſe who conſulted the ſouls of the dead, that his ſon was very happy, and that it had been much better for himſelf to have been in the ſame ſituation.

IF therefore death is the end of ſorrow, if it is the beginning of a ſafer and happier life, if it eaſes preſent and prevents future evils, if it removes us from the danger of every diſeaſe,

affliction,

affliction, or bitterneſs; why ſhould we accuſe it with ſo much virulence? why derive ſo much ſorrow from what is a much more natural ſource of conſolation and pleaſure? unleſs perhaps we explore, with anxious uncertainty, the conſequences of death: concerning which we may ſay ſomething, leaſt this ſingle retreat ſhould be left for a ſubterfuge to our grief and uneaſineſs; a retreat by no means to be left for thoſe who are puſillanimous. Nor in ſuch variety of arguments, while we attempt a conqueſt even over death itſelf, ſhall I heſitate to inveſtigate any lenitive to my own misfortunes which can be found.

CERTAINLY it is not within our ſphere to be anxious with regard to that time which ſucceeds our death, but rather leave that period to the immortal Gods, whoſe liberality and wiſdom, in this criſis, it would be laudable and pious to truſt. For ſince they receive us to the arms of providence from the womb; ſince, during the whole courſe of our life, we are ſupplied by their bounty, conducted by their wiſdom, and indulged by their paternal goodneſs; why ſhould we fear that they will abandon us in death?

YET it may not be unuſeful to inquire a little into theſe things, though with modeſty. For

one of two ſuppoſitions muſt be neceſſary, either that death ſhould extinguiſh all conſciouſneſs; or that, when ſeparated from this ſcene by death, the conſcious principles ſhould remove to another. But if all ſenſibility is loſt in death, and if our tranſition from life be like that profound ſleep, which ſometimes, without being excited by the feveriſh tranſports or anxious horrors of dreaming, yields us the moſt ſweet and ſacred repoſe, how immenſely do we gain by dying! or what period can be found preferable to one ſo placid and ſerene, to which in death the ſeries of future duration ſhall be ſimilar? But if we rather chuſe to think death a tranſition to thoſe regions inhabited by departed ſpirits, what can be more agreeable, than to return to that ſociety in death, which, when alive, we loved and admired? or to enjoy eternal being in communion with thoſe, who have laboured, both by their precepts and examples, to render our lives praiſe-worthy, and our deaths ſupportable? To me no event could be more welcome, than if death ſhould open a paſſage to thoſe other regions, where I might not only viſit, but dwell with ſuch perſons as I have formerly loved, and ſuch as I can never ceaſe to love and praiſe. When I ſhall approach my departed friends and relations, with how ſincere a joy

joy ſhall I exult! What converſation more endearing! what interviews, what embraces more ſweet! "O life truly meritorious of that name, "(as Ennius ſays), replete with every requiſite "good, and every rational enjoyment!" Whence death muſt likewiſe be a happy occurrence, as it is the paſſage to the happieſt life.

FOR my own part, though afflicted and even depreſſed by a violent grief, I feel myſelf not a little relieved by theſe views and conſiderations. I may therefore reaſonably hope, that there are none who may not receive ſome advantage and delight from theſe arguments, collected with ſo much care from the monuments of the wiſe and good, and receive them too, in proportion as the griefs of others are leſs ſevere than that with which I am at preſent agitated. For if the moſt ardent tenderneſs, the moſt inviolable filial duty, the pureſt virtue, the moſt exact regulation of manners, the moſt ſteady conduct; if theſe, and every other qualification ſcarce to be ſeen, much leſs expected in women, merit attention, I owe the moſt liberal tribute of tears to a loſs ſo ineſtimable, ſo irrecoverable.——But let my reaſon be ſuperior to my grief; nor ought I ſo much to conſider the vaſtneſs of my loſs, as how far it becomes me to lament a daughter ſubjected to the lot of mortality.

mortality. To this let me have recourſe in my affliction; for certainly it is conſiſtent with the higheſt fortitude when ſhaken, not only to receive, but even explore a remedy.

BUT if there is any one whoſe reaſon ſhall be abſorbed in grief, and who ſhall not think what has been already ſaid ſufficiently cogent, let him recollect that he is a man; nor is it leſs a condition of his nature to die than to live: and could he be exempted from death, or riſe above mortality, he ought rather to be eſteemed a god than a man; nor could the name of *man* be properly applied to him, were he ſuperior to the moſt univerſal and remarkable criſis of human nature.

BESIDES, he can gain nothing by tears; for if theſe could procure any redreſs, it would be proper not only to give way to the involuntary ſtream, but even induſtriouſly to impel and increaſe its current.

IN ſhort, he who grieves immoderately, does not only act an unjuſt, but a mean and unworthy part. Now the pains ariſing from baſeneſs and turpitude of manners, are infinitely more ſevere than thoſe of ſorrow. Grief is a ſentiment inſpired by nature, and conſequently may be indulged to a certain degree, without any brand of infamy; but beyond this all is meanneſs

meanneſs and guilt; which on this account are blameable, becauſe they imply ſomething unbecoming human nature, and owe their very exiſtence to weakneſs and vice. Every immoderate grief therefore is mean, and beneath the dignity of human nature; becauſe all immoderate and unreaſonable ſorrow muſt be voluntary, and owe their exceſs to indulgence: whence ariſes a fault, which men ought to ſhun and avoid with their utmoſt endeavours, leaſt by imbecillity and langour of thought, ſuch as haunts the lover diſtracted with fondneſs, our paſſions either ſwell to perturbation, or ſink us into weakneſs and effeminacy. Let us rather ſeek refuge in Homer's precept;

> Haſte, rouſe, collect the vigour of thy mind,
> Nor leave thy ſinking ſoul to grief reſign'd:
> That ſoul, unſhock'd, could formerly ſuſtain
> Severer anguiſh, and more piercing pain.

For we muſt naturally ſuppoſe, that none can ſurvive the funerals of their friends, without having formerly drunk deep of adverſity; ſo cloſely is human nature circumſcribed on all hands with variety of woe. Why therefore ſhould the ſoul, after having bravely ſuffered equal or ſeverer diſtreſſes; when, from former exertions, it ought to have acquired more vigour and ſpirit; why ſhould it loſe all hope,

and

and fall a prey to inexorable melancholy? This not long ago we have aſſerted to be unjuſt. For nature allows us the uſe of life in the ſame manner as ſums of money are lent, without preſcribing any definite time of payment: but if ſhe redemands her own at pleaſure, which was lent on condition of being reſtored, what title have we to accuſe her? or why do we not pay nature due acknowledgments, for making us ſo long the depoſitories of what ſhe might have ſo early reſumed, rather than fatigue her with our complaints for having at a particular time recovered it?

It is certain, that we muſt not regard ourſelves here as inhabitants, but lodgers; and when the period of changing our appartment arrives, we ought to remove with chearfulneſs, as from an inhoſpitable, miſerable, and diſagreeable lodging; and ſpread our wings with exultation of ſoul towards a future life, like thoſe who, after a long and troubleſome voyage, recogniſe with tranſport their native ſhore. So wiſe men are actually recorded to have done.

It may be affirmed, that if any thing diſconcerts ſuch as are dying, or renders their relations uneaſy, it muſt either ariſe from falſe impreſſions of the pleaſure and advantage of life, or from too high a degree of ſelf-love and pri-

vate

vate affection. But theſe falſe impreſſions, which reaſon ſufficiently refutes, ſhould be thrown aſide; and from all exceſs of this ſelf-love we ought to abſtain ſo much more willingly, as it is indecent for thoſe who have lived their deſtined period, to wiſh, and linger, and graſp at life, in oppoſition to the decrees of Heaven, or to decline the common deſtiny of all who have departed before us. This, in ſhort, betrays ſo much impotence of mind, and ſo much audacity, that even the laſt criſis of human misfortunes cannot teach us to bear them, nor the laſt efforts of divine providence in our diſcipline reclaim us.

But if the death of our friends grieve us, let us reflect that ſome time they were to die; that death is abſolutely uncertain, nor in the leaſt ſubject to human choice, but dependent on the will of Heaven; and that even thoſe whom we lament, have ſeen in their turn, and patiently ſuſtained the death of their friends: hence from their own example, as by the injunctions of the dead, we ought to regulate our conduct.

In ſhort, what ought chiefly and even effectually to comfort us, they are not for ever loſt, nor entirely raviſhed from us, but removed from our view and converſation only for a limited

mited time. When therefore we have reached that term preſcribed by nature as the ultimate period of life, we ſhall once more taſte the pleaſures of an intercourſe with them; we ſhall either be re-admitted to frequent communications, or paſs a whole eternity in cloſe and intimate union with them.

THERE are not a few who imagine death attended with inſufferable pangs and agony to their relations in their dying moments, and hence perhaps their diſturbance; which gives me very little uneaſineſs, when thoſe more important cauſes of ſorrow, which we have formerly diſproved, are abſtracted. For the very ſeparation of the ſoul from the body is either attended with little uneaſineſs, or none at all, and ſometimes happens without the leaſt ſenſibility; nay, frequently, if we judge rightly and live wiſely, with pleaſure. But whatever is the quantity of pain, it deſerves little attention, becauſe it often begins and ends in the ſame indiviſible inſtant. Nor, though the pains of death ſhould be protracted to ſome, have we any reaſon to deſpair. For the beneficent Gods, and that good and wiſe conſtitution which they have eſtabliſhed in nature, may, by numberleſs methods, not only relieve, but ſuſtain and comfort people in theſe circumſtances:

ſtances: Of which fact, dying perſons have often diſcovered ſuch ſymptoms, as were by no means ambiguous; ſo that, as if newly awaked from an agreeable dream, their whole countenance is ſo expreſſive of joy, that one could not but imagine them iſſuing from life with pleaſure. For which reaſon, thoſe misfortunes that are capable of alleviation can afford no juſt cauſe of grief, which, in the natural courſe of time, will vaniſh, and be quite extinguiſhed. Not that the mere protraction of time has any force to leſſen our griefs; but becauſe we are taught by long habit and conſtant reflection, that death is no evil, and therefore to be ſuſtained, not only with patience, but chearfulneſs. But it betrays baſeneſs and folly for men, endued with ſuch extenſive and various knowledge, rather to expect the remedies of his grief, after a long interval, from the revolutions of time, thought, and cuſtom, than to find them early in his own boſom. Theſe, when applied, are ſo certain and efficacious, as not only to eaſe, but cure every one to whom they are adminiſtered.

To me theſe were ſo much more neceſſary, as it appeared more unbecoming for one, who had perſiſted in comforting others, to give way to his own grief; and perhaps it might have

been whiſpered not unjuſtly, "Is this the Ci-
"cero, whoſe ſentiments could even gain the
"attention of the Greek philoſophers?"——

BUT I am effectually guarded by philoſophy againſt the viciſſitudes of time, the evils of nature, or the ſnares of fortune: For it is in itſelf ſuperior to the violence of every injury; ſo gentle and humane, that with eaſe it ſoftens and mitigates the moſt ſevere pain; in ſhort, ſo liberal and advantageous, that it exerts all its force, and is ever wholly employed in promoting the good of mankind. Nor ought it indeed to be otherwiſe; for ſince by philoſophy the aggregate of human miſery is well known and thoroughly explored, if ſhe ſhould ſuffer it to proceed beyond its natural bounds, nor with her ſalutary preſence enlighten and ſupport the ſufferer; what is there in nature more wretched than he? What could be more burdenſome, what more ſevere than our preſent ſtate of being? Or what would it avail to have received from Nature an erect form, a countenance fitted to ſurvey its native heaven, or to contemplate the majeſty and perfections of the Divinity? To what end have the immortal Gods inſpired us with conſciouſneſs and reaſon? Why taught us to diſcern what is good, to diſtinguiſh virtue from vice, to embrace juſtice,

and

and ſhun its contrary? In ſhort, what would the organs of ſpeech and the uſe of language profit us; conceſſions not indulged to creatures of an inferior order, and by which we excel all other conſcious beings beneath the ſky? as theſe advantages would appear leſs than nothing and vanity, if human nature, oppreſſed from different cauſes with innumerable ſorrows, could neither riſe above them to celeſtial objects, nor enjoy ſo many bleſſings, though the greateſt that infinite Goodneſs could beſtow. But as we have received many antidotes againſt poiſon; as we can oppoſe to the bitterneſs of want, activity, ſkill, and œconomy; as we can repel the ſolicitations of ſenſual pleaſure by modeſty and ſhame: ſo to the indulgence and liberality of Heaven we owe the ineſtimable privilege of defending ourſelves, by philoſophy, againſt the ſting of grief; which as none can praiſe equal to her excellency, ſo ſhe alone claims the higheſt acknowledgments from a number of her votaries, for their tranquillity of mind, for the government of their paſſions, for their abſolute dominion over pleaſure, and for an inexpreſſible vigour and fortitude in every affliction.

"UNASSISTED by thy beneficence, O Phi-
"loſophy! thou ſacred guide of human life,
"how

"how ſhould I have ſuffered baniſhment with "patience; how ſhould I have regulated my "ambition in public offices; or how ſhould I "have ſupported the preſent bitter affliction "with prudence and dignity!"——"But may "I not congratulate thee, O my dear Tullia; "may I not pronounce thee happy, if ſtill thou "art conſcious in death, who, by the ſhort a-"gonies of thy tranſition, haſt at once eluded "the ſhock of ſuch numberleſs, nameleſs miſe-"ries, as muſt have embittered thy deſtiny "hadſt thou ſurvived? Diſentangled from pre-"ſent, and reſcued from impending evils, thou "art landed in the ſafe and peaceful harbour "of endleſs repoſe. Juſtly may I eſteem death "agreeable to thee, whether thou revolveſt in "thy mind that happineſs which, when living, "it was in thy power to enjoy, or if thou art "engaged in calculating the number and great-"neſs of thoſe evils which thou haſt happily "eſcaped in death. Since therefore I muſt "conclude thee happy, I had almoſt ſaid, ſince "with theſe very eyes I ſee thee ſo, why ſhould "the ſenſe of thy fate agonize a father's heart? "Why ſhould I not rather exulting felicitate "thee on the acquiſition of thy ſupreme and "ultimate good? who art now above the ut-"moſt efforts of pain and bitterneſs, unleſs

"perhaps

" perhaps touched with the ſenſe of having left
" me, ſunk beneath the weight of old age, in
" a ſtate of public affairs ſo tumultuous, and
" in a ſituation of life ſo wretched. But even
" this, reaſon may, in ſome meaſure, alleviate;
" nor oughteſt thou to reflect how much pain
" I am at preſent deſtined to ſuffer, but how
" ſhort the time which muſt bring me to par-
" take of the ſame beatitude with thyſelf; for
" nothing extremely ſevere can happen to thoſe
" who are cheared and enlivened with the hopes
" of future and approaching good."

YET I know not what error, what miſerable blindneſs to truth, involves us; for we have by no means the ſame ſincere and perfect enjoyment of good, as our ſenſe of evil is ſharp and tormenting. Whence it happens, that, even in an involuntary manner, we increaſe our unhappineſs; but our good, inſtead of gaining luſtre from our eſtimation, inſtead of being hightened by our enjoyment, or augmented by the chearful diſpoſition in which it finds us, for ever diminiſhes in our conception and ſenſe of it; which ſurely ought not to be the caſe. For if we would treat this matter ſeriouſly, why ſhould we fly from grief and adverſity, which inſpire and confirm our fortitude; which, if they did not exiſt, could never produce that virtue, nor could

could any ſuch quality be recogniſed? Why ſhould we dread death, whoſe effects are ſo friendly, ſince, by continually recollecting it, we become better? Nor will the meditations it inſpires permit our inclinations to turn upon ſuch a courſe as may eclipſe our names, by the infamous brand of injuſtice or intemperance. Why ſhould we ſo eagerly purſue advantages which are the objects of vulgar admiration, and which, when attained, rather tend to corrupt than mend the heart? And ſo much are we enervated by the fallacious arts of pleaſure, that ſcarce do we remember at all the certain approach of our fate.

PLATO, the chief and greateſt of the philoſophers, wiſely ſaid, "That whatever our "corporeal ſenſes preſented as objects of hope "or fear, were no more than dreams, and "therefore entirely to be ſcorned; and that in "order to ſhun the evils here, we ſhould fly to "an eternal ſcene, where, if ye do no retire, it "will be impoſſible to avoid them." But no man can arrive at immortality, unleſs death conduct his ſteps, and open his paſſage.—— Where would this tend? To convince us that death is not only exempt from uneaſineſs, ſerene, ſeaſonable; but in ſhort, a real good, a moſt munificent

munificent and generous ſource of ſupreme and incorruptible felicity.

IT was thus Cato departed from life, highly pleaſed that he had found a cauſe to juſtify his dying. Nor can any one imagine, that he who was among the wiſeſt of men, would have expreſſed ſuch pleaſure at the approach of his fate, had he not thought death a real happineſs. For ſurely, in his own concerns, particularly ſuch as fall under the cogniſance of ſenſe, no man is deceived.

THIS may likewiſe be authoriſed by the teſtimony of Artaban, uncle to Xerxes, a man of great wiſdom; of whom we are told by Herodotus, that when Xerxes, viewing the whole powers of his almoſt innumerable army drawn up before him, wept to think that not a man of them ſhould be found ſurviving a hundred years after that time, he anſwered, "That "the living had ſo many and miſerable acci- "dents to ſuffer, as obliged every one frequent- "ly to wiſh for death; and that life was con- "tinually diſturbed with ſuch a ſucceſſion of "calamities and diſeaſes, ſo full of perpetual "ſolicitude, as to make the ſhorteſt appear ſuf- "ficiently long." No man therefore can doubt, that death is the refuge of a painful life. Nor did he ſtop here; but likewiſe added,

"That when the immortal Gods veiled and "gilded human life with many advantages, "to hide its intrinſic miſery, they had acted "with ſome degree of envy, leſt, conſcious of "the ſweetneſs of death, we ſhould purſue it "by every poſſible method."

IT is fabled that Amphiarus was very dear to Apollo and Jupiter, yet never arrived at old age.

FROM all which, what elſe can we conjecture, but that an accelerated death is the gift of Heaven, and a grand acquiſition? Therefore this maxim of the dramatic poet is judicious and pertinent;

> For he whom God in vernal years ſelects,
> With love embraces, and with care protects,
> Snatch'd from misfortunes ere his youth expires,
> In death, the end of human wo, retires.

For the Gods will ſuffer no being, who is the object of their fondneſs, to be miſerable; they muſt neceſſarily therefore take from them a life replete with ſiniſter accidents.

WHAT can happen to any man ſo delightful as to render him extremely tenacious of life? Perhaps the pleaſure which he receives from the acquiſition of any art or ſcience. But would you excel in art or ſcience, you muſt expect to be envied in proportion to your eminence; fatigue and anxiety will attend your purſuit; indifference

difference and ill-will will reward your attainments. For our ſatisfaction is by no means ſo great from the progreſs we have already made in learning, as our pain and uneaſineſs from the ſuperior number and importance of things which we have not as yet acquired, and which we would wiſh to know.

How inconſiderable is the pleaſure reſulting from the purſuit even of the finer arts? or rather, with what degree of pain and uneaſineſs are they not attended? How much perfidy do we find among their adepts? what intenſe hate? what jealous envy? or who is contented with his own deſtiny? How few can be found, who do not purſue with malice and detraction the induſtry or attainments of their competitors?

But if any one is fond of political life, and wiſhes to be conſpicuous in the ſtate, let him remember, for it is certainly true, that it muſt coſt him immenſe labour and concern to gain but the ſmalleſt ſhadow of honour, ſcarce any at all. For who was ever concerned in the public adminiſtration, without ſuffering inexpreſſible grief and diſappointment? And if we would judge impartially of the whole courſe of life, we ought to fix our attention on its end. Where now are theſe miniſters, or rather parents, of an excellent common-

wealth, Miltiades, Ephialtes, Cimon, Themiſtocles, and Ariſtides? How much miſery did they procure to themſelves by their fidelity, benevolence, integrity, and ſteadineſs? For this they were not only ſtripped of their honours, their power and authority, but even ſent into exile. It ought to have been quite the reverſe. Men whoſe characteriſtics are wiſdom and love of their country, ſhould be adorned with every enſign of public honour, and command attention from every eye. Among ourſelves, Scipio Africanus having eſpouſed a glorious cauſe, to check the inſatiate ambition of a few, was one morning found dead in his bed; nor was it ſuſpected without foundation, that his murderers were admitted by his wife, who was ſiſter to the Gracchi. What could be more wretched than the fate of Metellus, from his expedition againſt Jugurtha called *Numidicus*, a man of eminent worth and fame, who, becauſe he would not ſwear obedience to a law pernicious to himſelf, was forced into baniſhment! Yet I muſt confeſs, that amongſt all the different kinds of exile, amongſt all the different cauſes of misfortune, the ſituation of Numidicus was moſt honourable; whoſe ſincerity, integrity, and patriotiſm, were the ſources of his ſufferings. It muſt

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be owned, however, that to be expelled his country, to be torn from his deareſt relations, to be deprived of his fortune, to be an afflicted witneſs of the tears and ſufferings of his children, were calamities ſcarce ſupportable. I omit the inſtances of M. Regulus, C. Marius, and L. Brutus, whoſe lives were ſacrificed to their country. I would not be prolix in my alluſions to ſuch perſons, whoſe fate may be learned from their hiſtories, from their ſtatues, and even from common fame. Theſe accidents are doubtleſs very numerous, and very ſevere: yet this is ſtill more to be regretted, that, in the whole creation, we cannot find more conſummate miſery, than what muſt attend a man engaged in the purſuit of public offices, fired with ambition, and dependent on the inclinations of the people. What inutterable terrors, what extreme heſitation, what vigorous efforts, what inceſſant concern, muſt attend ſuch a ſtate! Hence we may juſtly pronounce, that he numbers all his hours by vexations. For if he is of inferior ſtation, that muſt neceſſarily imply the mortifying circumſtance, of being obliged to riſe to fortune and independence by ſtudying and humouring the inclinations, manners, and tempers of his ſuperiors. Can he therefore who ſerves the people, who are inſatiable

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their demands, invidious even of thoſe they truſt, ignorant of their real intereſt, and propenſely fond of changes; can he ever hope to be happy? Does he not rather lament the unhappineſs of his circumſtances, and the lubricity of his fortune, as often as he thinks upon the diſpoſitions which muſt characterize every populace? It was a noble obſervation of the ancient poet,

> For he, from whom alike the powers divine
> Exiſtence ſhare, and thoſe of mortal line,
> With light and ſhade diverſify'd his plan,
> But daſh'd with endleſs wo the life of man.

Whilſt therefore we enjoy this light, though we may ſeem to live, in effect we are no more than continually dying; or rather, we retain no more of life but the name, having loſt all the ſubſtantial advantages comprehended in its general idea. Let me affirm, that I cannot ſee through the whole variety of human life, what can happen either to invite our wiſhes, or yield us any degree of enjoyment. It is no ſecret, no unfrequent accident, that a number of people, rather than fall into greater evils than thoſe which generally happen in the courſe of things, have induſtriouſly, by their own interpoſition, accelerated their fate. This I do not mention to give it the ſanction of my approbation, but

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as an inſtance of that preſſure which life continually ſuffers, from the numberleſs difficulties that every where ſurround it. Cleomenes king of the Lacedemonians, and his ſon, both left the preſent ſcene by a voluntary death. Beſides theſe, Theagenes the Numantian, leſt he ſhould fall into the hands of his enemies, firſt deſtroyed his friends, and then himſelf. Thus we ſeem to have declared ſufficiently, how little reaſon we have to purſue life; or rather, how much to fly from it. And were it not beneath the dignity of men to explore the examples of fortitude in a ſex much weaker than they, we might collect from hiſtory the wife of Aſdrubal; who ſeeing Carthage ſubjected to the power of its enemies, plunged herſelf and three children into the flames of her burning country.

But beſides theſe calamities, which are more ſtriking and illuſtrious, let us honeſtly confeſs, that ſo great is the miſery to which human nature is ſubjected, as not only to comprehend the whole race, but even all its individuals, ſo that none can boaſt immunity. This makes it ſo much the more ſurpriſing, that our pains are not limited to the quantity of evils which are general in life; but we daily exert ourſelves, even with our full effort, to become more unhappy than our ſituation requires. Neither

will

will you find any living creature through the whole extent of things, except man alone, which exerts its cruelty, not only in hurting its own particular ſpecies, but even itſelf. Nor was the obſervation of Dicearchus unjuſt, who, in his learned and perſpicuous treatiſe on death, thought it would admit of no heſitation, that a greater number of men had periſhed by the cruelty and violence of men, than by all other adverſe occurrences taken together. For the avarice of many is ſo great, ſo boundleſs their ambition, ſuch their avidity of wealth and power, that every means, every conduct, which can tend to the accompliſhment of their deſires, to them appears lawful. Nor is this evil of modern date, nor confined to the narrow limits of time and place; but, in former ages, its operations were violent, and its dominion wide. For its devaſtations were not circumſcribed by particular ſocieties of men; ſtates and empires, raſed even to their foundation, were its frequent victims.

But if from ſocieties, as the mind would naturally deſcend, you turn your attention to particular men, you ſhall find them poſſeſſed of but very little which you can admire, or could wiſh to obtain. For let your imagination form to itſelf, from the common notions of mankind,

kind, an idea of every thing proſperous and happy which can happen in life; let riches, health, honours, and power be collected; let pleaſures of every kind be added; when you have conferred all theſe on any man, you cannot aſcertain his poſſeſſion of them, nor inſure their duration one moment, for they are capable of the moſt unexpected changes in eternal ſucceſſion. All human poſſeſſions are periſhable and uncertain; they elude our graſp, and vaniſh even in fruition: The moſt vigorous efforts cannot obtain, nor the wiſeſt plan ſecure them; for they depend alone on the capricious adminiſtration of fortune, and the inſtantaneous revolutions of time. What can be more mean in a reaſonable being, than to place his happineſs on events which depend on the wild and extravagant eddies of time and fortune; to be elated with her fallacious ſmile, or dejected when ſhe contracts her brow? How inglorious is it to boaſt in any proſperous occurrency, or to lament any thing adverſe with inconſolable tears?

WHERE then is the exaggerated diſtinction between man and ſpeechleſs animals, if we, in the ſame manner with them to whom Nature has denied the uſe of reaſon, depend entirely on external things; if we retain nothing

of fortitude, no vigour nor ſteadineſs? For though Nature, not like a mother but a ſtep-dame, has made the corporeal frame of man tender, and obnoxious to a thouſand evils, and his ſoul racked with misfortunes, depreſſed with fears, and reluctant to toils; ſhe has however endowed us with certain rays of divinity, with ſparks of fortitude and reaſon, by whoſe aſſiſtance we are able to ſtruggle with ſorrow, to reſiſt fear, to ſuſtain and conquer fatigue with eaſe and dignity. It is therefore incumbent on us not to extinguiſh that portion of deity, that light of conſciouſneſs and wiſdom which we ſhare, but to animate and nouriſh it when depreſſed.

If we are conſiderably advanced in life, there can be nothing in approaching diſſolution with which we ought to be much affected; as it ſhall either certainly place us in better circumſtances than thoſe which living we enjoy, or, at leaſt, not in worſe. For who will deny, if the ſoul is to be quite annihilated, that there can be no evil in conſciouſneſs extinguiſhed? But if it ſurvives in poſſeſſion of its former vigour, and delivered from the body, what life can be more happy! what more divine! This ought to be a great, a real ſource of gladneſs and pleaſure. No difficulty therefore remains;

mains: but we may aſſert with eaſe and freedom, that death is a real good; and that, far from grieving at its preſence, we ought never to fly from it, ſometimes to deſire it; and this ſo much the more, in proportion to the time which any one has lived. For then, when he begins to be cloyed with all the advantages and pleaſures which life can offer, he ſhall at once retire from all the miſeries of human, and arrive at all the beatitude of divine life. Nor am I one of thoſe who can be eaſily perſuaded, that the ſoul periſheth with the body; that a being, which ſo largely participates the nature of God, ſhould ever be entirely extinct; but rather that, having finiſhed the limited career of life, it returns to its native immortality. For what can more become a man furniſhed with arguments ſo numerous and invincible, than to preſerve his courage undaunted, and to ſhake off entirely the feminine paſſions of fear and ſorrow?

THEY who too much deplore the dead, nor are capable, with due grandeur and dignity of ſoul, to deſpiſe the adverſe accidents of life, juſtly and highly deſerve the following reproach;

Shame to your ſex and years, in youth reſign'd
To all the weakneſs of a woman's mind;
Whilſt ſhe, a woman, courage ſtill maintains,
And in her breaſt a manly ſpirit reigns.

For many women may be found, who, in private diſtreſſes, have diſcovered the moſt conſummate prudence and magnanimity. But a maſculine fortitude ought in the ſame manner, as his lord commands a ſtubborn ſlave, to treat every immoderate deſire and ſorrow; to ſubdue and reſtrain them as the moſt depraved and weakeſt powers of the ſoul, which, if they are permitted to riſe and exert their force a little, will not only tyranniſe over reaſon, but obtain a complete triumph over the whole mind; a ſtate more unbecoming, more deſtructive to man, than any elſe which can be imagined.

GORGIAS the orator, when extenuated with years, and on the verge of life, being aſked, if he was willing to die? anſwered, "Yes; for "I ſhall eſcape with pleaſure, as from a lod-"ging, where I have been long plagued with bad "air, and every other inconvenience:" An opinion which alone could be indulged by a man of excellence and dignity, and which may be wiſhed ſtill to ſurvive in the minds and converſations of every one. What indeed could he ſay more noble? For when he numbered the

the evils which, living, he was reduced to the neceſſity of ſuffering, what ought he to do, but rejoice at the approach of death, as the end of ſorrows, which he eternally forſakes? Thus a man is entitled to ſpeak, who is not a ſlave to his paſſions, who is not entangled by the allurements of pleaſure; in ſhort, who is not obſequious to the arbitrary dictates of any favourite inclination: which is the ſublimeſt perfection of reaſon, the higheſt degree of wiſdom; for it renders us ſuperior to the neceſſities of nature, invincible even to the attacks of grief, above the preſſure of regret or ſolicitation of deſire, and, in a word, fearleſs in every human contingency.

ARE we tormented with the death of our children or allies? why ſo? That we may diſcover our folly, by ſuffering with impatience a fate which we cannot avert, and which, in contradiction to our will, muſt deſcend upon us with all its weight; whilſt the examples and teſtimonies which the wiſer and better part of mankind have left behind them to illuminate eternity with their ſplendor, are entirely neglected by us. Would it be in the leaſt more abſurd, with the uſe of ſight, to walk like a blind man; or, when you might enjoy ſociety and ſunſhine, purſue ſolitude and darkneſs?

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AND now the current of our diſcourſe leads us to thoſe, whoſe conduct deſerves our emulation, and whom antiquity propoſes to us as examples worthy of our purſuit. I imagine therefore no man will heſitate to pronounce, that death is not to be numbered amongſt our evils, but ranked amongſt the greateſt goods of which our nature is ſuſceptible. For if it removes us from miſery, if it places us in a happier ſtate of being, if it is neither miſerable itſelf, nor productive of any miſery, why ſhould it be pronounced an evil? But if ſuch is its benignity, that it puts us in poſſeſſion of eternal advantages, and, by depriving us of a life full of viciſſitudes and ſubject to corruption, recalls us to one which is immortal and incorruptible, what can be more productive of happineſs than death? We have therefore heard, that the wiſeſt of men have not only been unſhocked by the death of their relations, not only remained unaffected with grief, but have diſcovered a rational joy and ſatisfaction.

IT is delivered to memory, that when Anaxagoras, during his prelection of the nature of things amongſt his friends, was told that his ſon was juſt expired, he only anſwered, That "in begetting a ſon, he begot a mortal crea-

"ture;

"ture;" a very rational maxim, and worthy to have been pronounced by ſo great a man; for I do not ſee what could have been ſaid expreſſive of greater wiſdom or equanimity. Should he have ſaid, "Alas, he died young!" this would have ſhown his depreſſion of mind, and not that determined ſpirit which is neceſſary to encounter adverſity: Or that he was tormented, not on his own, but his ſon's account; would he not then have confeſſed his ignorance of the numberleſs evils his ſon had eſcaped? Or that he was grieved, but acknowledged and ſuffered the accident as a part of human deſtiny; where then was the ſteadineſs, the prudence, the wiſdom of a philoſophical character? or how did he differ from the moſt uncultivated vulgar? Amongſt whom however there are many who are not only little afflicted with ſuch events as neceſſarily happen, but who declare it as their opinion, that ſuch occurrences ought neither to affect us with emotion or ſurpriſe, becauſe they are inevitable and common to all. But he, who was truly a wiſe man and a philoſopher, inſtead of being ſtruck with the unexpected meſſage, inſtead of being diverted from his ſubject, rather collecting his attention, and raiſing his voice, gave the moſt ſtriking inſtance of fortitude and wiſdom.

I WISH the ſame thing could be ſaid of a great many amongſt us, whom, if at any time ſtruck with a reverſe of fortune, you would imagine in no better ſituation, than overwhelmed and abandoned to ultimate deſpair; as if they had felt the weight of ſome new affliction, not deſtined for others, but reſerved from all eternity in the boſom of Fate for them alone; ſome unheard-of miſery, which ought neither to have happened then, nor at any future period: And when they ought to exert the whole energy of their ſouls, they are not only forgetful of theſe virtues formerly exhibited, not only inſenſible to the illuſtrious examples among their own anceſtors, but even loſt to themſelves. So extenſive is the power of that puſillanimous languor over their minds, ſo invincible the tyranny of grief and ſadneſs.

BUT can I think that man poſſeſſed of moral liberty, who is under the dominion of grief; who is diſturbed, impelled, overwhelmed by any unexpected accident; who, intent alone on the greatneſs of his ſorrow, is incapable either of projecting or contemplating any thing; who depends not in the leaſt for his own happineſs upon himſelf, but expects all his good from time and fortune, of which the eſſential qualities are *fluctuation* and *change?* This I would

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not chuſe to call by the milder name of *ſervitude*, but by that of *the moſt miſerable captivity*. For what is the difference between the wretch who inhabits the dungeon, ſurrounded with the vigilance of guards, and groaning beneath the weight of hoſtile chains; what is the difference between ſuch a one, and him who, tyranniſed by grief, has loſt all the powers of choice and deliberation? The one, though his body be ſubjected, may poſſeſs ample freedom of ſoul, and indulge the pleaſing hope of regaining his former liberty: but he who is under the deſpotiſm of grief, neither can boaſt freedom, nor health of body, and, at the ſame time, bends beneath the moſt abject ſlavery of ſorrow; for he can neither enjoy his friends, nor aſſiſt the commonwealth, nor ſuperintend domeſtic affairs, nor execute public buſineſs. Thus relaxed from all employments, to ſuffer more fatigue than can attend any one, though the moſt laborious, he neither obeys another, nor governs himſelf: To whom, as he is for ever preſſed with painful and difficult alternatives, one of two things muſt be neceſſary, either to protract his grief, and be miſerable; or, what is abſolutely impracticable, that he ſhould at once retain his grief, and loſe his miſery.

How much more wiſe was the procedure of

Xenophon, who, while he celebrated the ſacred ſolemnities, and heard that his eldeſt ſon fell at the battle of Mantinea, only laid the chaplet from his head, but perſiſted with ſteadineſs in ordering the ſacred rites. But when it appeared that the youth had fallen gloriouſly, the father again reſumed his chaplet, and invoked thoſe very gods, in whoſe worſhip he was engaged, to witneſs, that he had more pleaſure from the virtues of his ſon than grief from his loſs. Such a man, I might venture to ſay, would be equally prepared for every poſſible contingency, nor feel his ſoul diſconcerted with any. For why ſhould I believe that the man who could perſevere in the worſhip of Heaven with ſo much equanimity and decorum, even when he heard of the death of his ſon, would oppoſe its decree, by immoderately deploring that cataſtrophe? or that he who preferred the conſciouſneſs of his ſon's virtue to the length of his life, might not juſtly be thought ſo inflamed with the love of his country, ſo much inſpired with a paſſion for virtue, as to remain equally unmoved in every viciſſitude of life?

But in proportion as thoſe who diſcover this greatneſs of ſoul are ſeldom to be found, ſo much more conſpicuous they are. For nothing is more entitled to praiſe, than the juſt and laudable

laudable purſuit of eternal renown, or a warm and inviolable attachment to our country, or patience and dignity in ſuffering misfortunes. Animated by theſe grand principles, the ſoul riſes above herſelf, and ſcorns thoſe tempeſts which ſhake the reſt of mankind. But they who are too much diſtracted with low care and ſolicitude, will entirely exclude from their minds the deſire of praiſe, the advantage of their country, and, in ſhort, whatever we eſteem great or good. Nor can any one whoſe whole ſoul is tormented with private and ſelfiſh anxiety, either project the welfare of his country, or diſtinguiſh himſelf by noble actions, or undertake and ſupport any grand enterprize; but, for ever intent on his own concerns, and conſulting his own advantage, he ſhall forget every thing elſe, and remain night and day the perpetual ſubject of his own attention. Thus he ſhall neither perform the offices due to civil life nor to human nature. It is the eſſential character of a good man, to labour with equal aſſiduity for the welfare of others as for his own. Nor is it leſs the character of a good patriot, to ſuſpend, or even ſacrifice, every private advantage, and to make the higheſt happineſs and greateſt ſafety of his country his perpetual and ultimate end; from which

great purſuits, neither grief, nor any other diſturbance, ſhould have power to abſtract us.

HISTORIANS tell us, that in four days Pericles was deprived of two ſons, youths of a very promiſing genius, who ſuſtained his grief with ſo much fortitude, and ſuch unbroken ſpirit, that he changed no part of his former manners or dreſs, but preſerved the ſame order and plan of public appearances as before, nor ever took the crown from off his head; of whom it is recorded, that he would have thought nothing more unworthy, than if his grief had extorted from him any tokens of an unmanly and dejected mind. Him then we muſt acknowledge a brave man, whom neither the irreſiſtible force of nature, which often melts the ſoul to too much tenderneſs, nor the love of his children, which is ſaid to have been ardent, could diſſolve to grief, nor move from his uniform and regular tenor of conduct; a behaviour not only worthy of praiſe, but eternal memory. Nor is it ſurpriſing: For real fortitude excludes and baniſhes unavailing anxiety; it ſuppreſſes the deſires; it reduces fear to ſubjection; it demands nothing unworthy of a brave man, nor is repulſed from any purſuit by terror or weakneſs.

AND though reaſon itſelf, aſſiſted by the dictates

ates of learning, and the force of culture, confirms nature however elevated and ſublime, which certainly was the caſe with Pericles, a man of eminent learning and ſuperior genius; yet native fortitude is the grand ſupport of the mind: which as it deſpiſes the common contingencies of life, nor, like a being depreſſed and riveted to earth, regards any thing low with attention; ſo its fruits are produced with greater eaſe, abundance, and maturity, when the force of reaſon, the influence of culture, and the aſſiſtance of learning are applied to it, as to a grateful and congenial ſoil. We muſt not then imagine that theſe great men were quite inſenſible of grief; for what fortitude could we find in hearts naturally hard and unfeeling? But thoſe who feel grief exert the whole collected vigour of the ſoul againſt it, nor forbear the contention, till having obtained a complete victory, they remain deſpotic maſters of the field. For it is unqueſtionably true, that no greater plague, no ſurer perdition, can happen to the mind, than relaxation in its own diſcipline; which, if it is attentive, and prepared for reſiſtance, eaſily ſuſtains every violence, or baffles and repells even the moſt reſolute attacks. But when its nerves loſe their vigour by indolence and remiſſion, it is ſo

fiercely

fiercely invaded, ſo cloſely preſſed on all hands, that in vain are its utmoſt endeavours to recover its poiſe. Nor was any one ever able to repulſe the incurſions of grief, nor to bear the conflict with courage, unleſs by aſſembling and preparing every defenſive power for reſiſtance. Nor is fortitude acquired, but by firſt having long and obſtinately withſtood many griefs; from whence ariſes a habit that clothes the mind in armour ſelf-derived, and fortifies us againſt every wound of nature, and every ſting of fortune.

CAN we ſuppoſe that Harpagus the Mede would have been able to exhibit ſuch a grand example of ſelf-poſſeſſion, as Herodotus tranſmits to poſterity, if he had not formerly been frequently and long engaged in the exerciſe of patience and fortitude? This however he did not without the moſt ample reward, as by it he acquired eternal fame; for he diſtinguiſhed himſelf ſo much by wiſdom and magnanimity, as to ſuffer, without the leaſt indication of uneaſineſs, one of the moſt inhuman injuries that could be inflicted on man; and, by thus ſuppreſſing his emotions, he was able to ſatiate his vengeance on a tyrant for his execrable cruelty. Thus when King Aſtyages had cauſed his ſon to be ſlain, and ſerved up to

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the father at an entertainment; when, after ſupper, he had preſented his head, and demanded of Harpagus with what animal's bowels he had been feaſted; he, neither frighted nor diſconcerted in the leaſt degree, anſwered, "That "he knew what was done; and that whatever "pleaſed the king ought to pleaſe him." So he concealed his ſenſe of this brutal injury, till he could call Cyrus from Perſia, who, at his arrival with a mighty army, obtained an eaſy and complete conqueſt of the kingdom, and abſolute power of the king's perſon from Harpagus, whom Aſtyages had truſted with the command of his forces.

THUS was the deteſtable tyrant ſubjected to the power of Cyrus, and forced juſtly to atone for his violation of a tie ſo ſacred; an action worthy to fill the theatre of human nature, and the circle of eternity with praiſe. By this, not only thoſe who ſink beneath affliction may be excited to fortitude and patience, but even kings, and ſuch as are intruſted with the command of others, may learn, that no power can give ſanction or impunity to impious and cruel actions. For ſuch is the heat, ſuch the reſentment, with which impiety and injuſtice are attended, that though mankind were willing to ſuffer and conceal thoſe crimes, the very elements

ments themſelves, nay, heaven and hell, would raiſe in arms againſt them. And though the indignation of Heaven may ſometimes delay its full completion, yet are not the wicked ſuffered to exult and triumph in impiety, but inceſſantly tormented with the anguiſh of an offended conſcience, and the intolerable ſenſe of iniquity: Theſe internal plagues, like furies, for ever torture them, and are as inſeparable from them as exiſtence itſelf. Nay, ſo extenſive, ſo powerful is our reſentment of impiety, that when tyrants have been ſlain, and ſuffered all the anguiſh which ingenious cruelty could inflict, not a heart relented, not a tear fell for them; for towards theſe men, and towards theſe alone, compaſſion forgets her generous impulſe, and becomes totally extinct.

Now though grief, as we have formerly ſaid, ought to be ſuppreſſed by reaſon, it will be much more effectually cured by habit, whoſe power is ſo great, as not only to make every tempeſt of the ſoul ſubſide, but alſo to impreſs a contrary bias on nature, to change and render it entirely different from itſelf; by whoſe aſſiſtance we may not only with eaſe repel and deſpiſe the ſtings of grief, but even the thunderbolts of fortune. Let us therefore conſider, let us fix it as a principle, that no thing

thing which befalls human nature is a proper ſubject of grief; not death, for we have already acknowledged it a bleſſing; not indigence, becauſe this is often a portion adminiſtered to us by Heaven for the beſt; not baniſhment, ſince the whole world is open to every one; nor other viciſſitudes of the ſame kind, which the vulgar opinion denominates the greateſt of evils. For there is no evil, however ſevere, from which, by the diſintereſted beneficence of Heaven, ſome advantage much greater and more eligible may not be extracted. The writings of the philoſophers are full, and almoſt every page of them pregnant with reaſons and arguments, together with ſuch a number of examples, that we could ſcarce wiſh for more. Since then things are as we find them, what reaſon have we to fear any thing? what grief has power enough to ſubdue us?

DION, of the Platonic ſchool, when his ſon had expired by a fall from the top of an houſe, did not only remain unmoved, but ſtrenuouſly purſued the buſineſs in which he was engaged: By which action we have the deciſion of a wiſe man, and a Platoniſt, how other philoſophers ought to behave in the ſame circumſtances.

BUT the conduct of Traheaſpas was much

braver, who was a ſpectator of his ſon's fate transfixed by an arrow, without the leaſt degree of uneaſineſs. For when Cambyſes, full of wine and reſentment, had aimed a ſhaft at his ſon, and pierced his boſom, he deſired his father to obſerve whether it had reached his heart; to whom, when Traheaſpas had replied, that the ſhaft had pierced it, "Have I not "then," redemanded the king, "a ſteady "aim?" The father, without the leaſt diſcovery of uneaſineſs, without turning away, or changing his countenance, anſwered, "That "he did not believe Apollo himſelf could diſ-"miſs an arrow with more certainty." What can we ſuppoſe this father would have done, if his ſon had fallen in the exertion of his courage, and warmly engaged amidſt the heat and fury of a battle, who could, without any ſenſible emotion, behold an innocent ſon expire by a cruel and unmerited wound? Muſt we not imagine that the honourable death of a ſon, who fell the glorious victim of his country, would give infinite pleaſure to ſuch a parent? Yet I doubt not, but there are numbers who would pronounce him impious, and deaf to the moſt tender importunities of nature. But let theſe judge as they will; it is enough to me, if they grant, that this was a moſt conſpi-

cuous

ious inſtance of fortitude, and a ſurpriſing onqueſt of grief.

If then, while we ſurvey the virtue of others, ur ſouls, when unbalanced by adverſity, reume their wonted firmneſs, who can we ſuppoſe would give way to grief, after hearing of o many who had conquered the ſtruggles of ature and paſſion in affliction? For which eaſon, I am afraid leſt ſo great a number of xamples collected from antiquity, may appear ain, or even irkſome. But if I wrote for others, and not more particularly for myſelf, erhaps I ſhould be ſhorter in my obſervations, nd more diffuſe in my examples. Yet it happens, I know not how, that we are naturally mpelled to collect remedies from the evils of others for our own; at leaſt, ſo it ſeems to me; and whilſt I endeavour the cure of my own mind, ſuch as may happen to revolve theſe pages, ought not to be ſurpriſed, if they find any thing expreſſed with more than ordinary prolixity. This was doubtleſs my plan, that I might be of ſervice to others as well as to myſelf, and conſole as much as poſſible the uneaſineſs of every ſufferer. By recapitulating thoſe things, therefore, I have found my own ſorrows much ſoothed and diminiſhed. Hence I flatter my inclination, that the ſame cauſes may

operate upon others the ſame ſalutary effect: if I may, without offence to modeſty, let me likewiſe be permitted to hope it. For amidſt ſuch a quantity of arguments and examples, in which thoſe who read will find their curioſity fully gratified, what heart can remain unmoved? what grief be indocile to the voice of reaſon and experience?

[*Here a conſiderable part is wanting.*]

NOR am I ignorant, that a great many caſes may happen, in which the ſoul is ſo diſturbed, as to fly from all remedies: and if this be at any time our ſituation, it muſt be particularly ſo, when we are under the influence of grief; which happens for this reaſon, that the memory of a deceaſed friend, an ally, or a ſon, is ſo dear to us, as almoſt to place the perſon before our very eyes. Thus, though it perpetually irritates every ſenſe of ſorrow, though it calls forth our tears in profuſion, we can never condeſcend to reſign; and though lenitives might be found to ſooth us, yet our ears are more acceſſible to every thing, than to the words of thoſe who would adminiſter a cure. Such a conduct is doubtleſs very wrong; but the error is ſo delightful, that, in proportion to the pleaſure

pleaſure it gives, we are reluctant to forſake it. Let therefore nature operate; let every one, for ſome time, enjoy the melancholy pleaſure of regret: For though we ought not to ſtem the current of grief in its firſt and moſt violent impulſes, yet I am not in the leaſt afraid, that when, of itſelf, it begins to ſubſide, and become inſenſibly more remiſs, in that important criſis, we will ſpontaneouſly apply theſe rules and arguments to baniſh its remains. Nor can any thing be more uſeful than, even in the hours of mirth and chearfulneſs, to prevent too much diſſipation, by revolving theſe topics, and keeping the books which contain them for ever in our hands: For thus they may be read, impreſſed on the mind, and acquired by the memory almoſt *verbatim*; ſo that when they have taken poſſeſſion of the underſtanding, it will neither be eaſy to efface nor obliterate them. Thus it will happen, that for ever provident of grief, we ſhall be able to intercept its moſt unforeſeen attacks, by the application of theſe remedies, which, unleſs they are before accurately ſtudied, and thoroughly underſtood, will be abſorbed, or ſwept away, by the torrent. This I have felt in myſelf: Nor was my experience cheaply purchaſed; becauſe, not many years ago, I reviewed, with care and accuracy,

curacy, all that had been ſaid to fortify the heart againſt grief. For though I had read with diligence what the philoſophers had wrote, either concerning death or other calamities, ſuch as Theophraſtus, Xenocrates, and others; yet this I did not do from any preſage that their writings might be of uſe to me in my future griefs. On this account, I did not read them ſo frequently, nor retain them ſo carefully, as it afterwards appeared that I ought to have done. For being at once ſurpriſed with the preſſure of a ſudden affliction, I could have no recourſe to books and ſtudy, till quite dejected by the violence of my grief; yet, by the courſe of time, as my uneaſineſs did not increaſe, my mind became more deliberate, and more ſuſceptible of comfort from philoſophy.

BUT let us proceed to what remains; which, though not an ample field, is perhaps highly worthy of our knowledge and obſervation, as it is extremely fruitful of every thing uſeful and agreeable, which are the particular objects of our ſearch and attention.

WHAT then can inſpire us with the ſmalleſt heſitation, in pronouncing that the death of our friends is no ſubject of grief? Perhaps it may ſtrike our fancy, that we would have received mighty advantage from the care and aſſiſtance of

of thoſe whom we have loſt: This concern, however, extends not to thoſe friends and relations whoſe death we ſeem to lament, but terminates merely in ourſelves. It is therefore a baſe and mercenary regret, not inſpired by nature, not dictated by friendſhip, but the child of intereſted expectation and mean advantage. What then can be more impious and deſpicable, than for him, who ſeems thus afflicted, to be reduced to the neceſſity of confeſſing, even when ſo much agitated by the fate of his friend or relation, that, in loſing his friend, he has loſt ſome external advantage; which being abſtracted, the death or life of the perſon deplored would be to the mourner indifferent events.

But we need not ſearch among the Perſians and Scythians for inſtances of fortitude; our own city affords us examples from men of the higheſt reputation, and moſt conſummate worth, who ſuſtained, with ſo much bravery and conſtancy, not only the death of friends, with whom they had lived in the greateſt intimacy, but even that of their children; children too endeared by all the ties of nature and virtue, that they may not only be compared, but even with the higheſt juſtice preferred, to the Greeks formerly mentioned. And it was ſo much the more ſurpriſing in them, that the perſons

perſons whoſe loſs they ſuſtained with ſo much vigour and ſteadineſs, would not only have been uſeful to them had they ſurvived, but were almoſt the only ſources from which the ſufferers could expect either advantage or pleaſure.

FROM whence could more advantage be expected than from a ſon? whence more delight than from an only ſon? But Q. Fabius loſt a ſon, an only ſon, after he had arrived at the conſular dignity; after he had executed many noble enterpriſes, and planned others of ſtill ſuperior extent and grandeur: yet he did not only preſerve himſelf from being depreſſed with grief, (a conduct ſufficient to indicate the greatneſs of his ſoul), but even pronounced his ſon's funeral panegyric in the Forum, than which no inſtance of a behaviour more admirable or praiſe-worthy can be found in the whole annals of human nature. And who could ceaſe to admire his oration? a performmance exquiſite for genius, taſte, and method. By what means was it poſſible for him to pronounce what he ſaid without tears, or to meditate what he wrote without grief? ſince in his oration we are ſurpriſed, and even aſtoniſhed with this in particular, that he does not follow the general method, by treating of the

fortitude

fortitude of others, that, from their example, he may ſuſtain his own misfortune; but expatiating on his own ſon alone, he enumerates, in a long diſcourſe, all the virtues, all the praiſes, which were peculiar to the departed youth, and every circumſtance which could heighten paternal regret: An inſtance of virtue ſo ſingular, that perhaps it may ſeem to diminiſh conſiderably the fame of Horatius Pulvillus; yet as he too diſtinguiſhed himſelf amongſt the greateſt of mankind, I ſhould think it criminal to paſs him over in ſilence, ſince, in reſigning his ſon to the Greateſt and Beſt of Beings with ſo much greatneſs of ſoul, and ſuch equality of temper, he made a more grateful ſacrifice to Heaven, than that of the temple which he conſecrated. For whilſt, in the exerciſe of his pontifical office, and holding the pillar, he pronounced the ſolemn words of conſecration, having heard that his ſon was dead, he neither removed his hand from the pillar, leaſt the ſacred rites ſhould be interrupted, nor turned his face from the people, leaſt he ſhould rather ſeem attentive to his own grief, than to the public welfare and happineſs.

WHERE is there a more ſignal, or more illuſtrious inſtance of this kind than L. Paulus?

who, in a few days, loſt two ſons, with ſo much ſerenity of ſoul, that ſcarce any ſymptom of a grief, which muſt have been in itſelf bitter, eſcaped him. Nay, in his oration to the Roman people concerning his own tranſactions, he rather rejoiced, that what was threatened adverſe to the ſtate had, by the courſe of providence, fallen on him alone.

WHO will deny that Sulpicius Gallus acted nobly? whoſe innocence, wiſdom, and military virtue, glowed with more than native luſtre, heightened by his fortitude at the death of his ſon; whoſe virtue though I could not with chearfulneſs ſuppreſs, yet my fancy, conſcious of her approach to Cato, relumes her ardor and precipitates her flight, and, as if tranſported to a placid harbour, when all the elements conflict with inexorable fury, repoſes in the character and example of this god-like man. Nor can the noble actions of that hero, nor his virtues, not only tried in political but military life, inſpire me with more admiration, than that fortitude which, at the death of his ſon, then in proſpect of public dignity, he diſcovered in the eyes of all his countrymen. Nor would it be difficult to comprehend, in this diſcourſe, ſuch of our countrymen as have imitated the illuſtrious examples of antiquity in

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the noble actions which they performed, even when clouded with domeſtic misfortune and calamity, ſuch as have ſuffered couragiouſly and patiently the moſt exquiſite diſtreſſes which fortune could inflict. For when Quintius Martius Rex had loſt an only ſon, of the greateſt piety and virtue, he became, by a ſtrong effort of prudence, ſo much ſuperior to his grief, that the ſame day in which he had ſeen the funeral fires of his ſon, he entered the hall, and ordered the ſenate to be aſſembled. And Craſſus, when his ſon was ſlain in that battle which he fought with the Parthians, was ſo far from grieving, that he reproached the army for being ſo much moved for the loſs of one ſoldier; and urged them, inſpired with the invincible ſpirit of their anceſtors, to fight with their utmoſt bravery for their country, leaving to him alone the taſk of avenging his dead ſon. But Publius Craſſus, more ancient than he, a man of eminent fame and conſular dignity, both ſaw and ſuſtained with moderation the death of P. Craſſus his ſon. Nor was Cneus Cepio leſs worthy of praiſe than Craſſus; perhaps he deſerved more: for having heard that his ſon was loſt at ſea, he appeared ſo little touched with grief, that none of his moſt intimate acquaintances could perceive the leaſt al-

teration either in his countenance or deportment. Why ſhould I enumerate the Piſones, Scevolæ, Bruti, Marcelli, Metelli, Lepidi, and Aufidii? each of whom having loſt a number of their neareſt relations, either connected by conjugal, parental, or filial ties, were ſo far from thinking lamentation the proper decorum of a noble character, that the funerals of their friends proved ſo many ſucceſsful trials of their eminent virtue, in which they diſcovered themſelves not only faithful to their own dignity, but to that of their anceſtors, and even of the Roman name. This was their conduct, and in this they placed their glory.

WHILST I recapitulate the ſevere misfortunes of great and good men, I would be aſhamed to do it in a prolix and florid manner; becauſe fortitude is the diſtinguiſhing virtue of our ſex, and is ſtill more powerful and illuſtrious in the nobleſt and moſt eminent of their kind. Let us therefore deſcend to make trial of a ſofter ſex, that when they ſhall likewiſe be found diſtinguiſhed for magnanimity, men may bluſh to obſerve, in a nature ſo gentle, ſo ſuſceptible of every painful impreſſion, inſtances of that force and grandeur in which they glory; nor eaſily ſuffer themſelves to be conquered by thoſe in whom nature has left

a greater ſhare of weakneſs, conquered even in thoſe qualities which are eſſential to their ſex and character.

For if this tenet be true, which we have ſomewhere elſe mentioned as recorded by Theophraſtus, that the world is a certain vaſt theatre, animated by a divine ſpirit, adorned and embelliſhed with innumerable ſhining ornaments on all ſides, to ſhow the conſummate wiſdom of its Artificer: that, in the midſt of this vaſt and various ſcene, God has thought proper to place his creature man, that he might inceſſantly ſtruggle with viciſſitudes, griefs, poverty, diſeaſe, and innumerable accidents; and that God himſelf beholds from above, how much force every one exerts in the ſtruggle, what uſe every one makes of the fortitude originally derived from him: If this, I ſay, be true, we can ſee no reaſon to doubt, why the Roman people, when attentive to the ſpectacles of the Circus, ſhould hate ſuch gladiators as deſcend to mean ſupplications for life, and favour thoſe who have a juſt contempt of it. In the ſame manner, the immortal Powers, when they behold men too anxiouſly concerned for life, and endeavouring to ſhun its ultimate period, muſt entertain ſome degree of reſentment againſt them. But they will view with tenderneſs, and accumulate with bleſſings

thoſe,

thoſe, who either when recalled from life themſelves, or when they ſee their friends recalled, obey the divine mandate with chearfulneſs, and are conſcious that, from this event, they can ſuffer no evil. But if we find, that even the women have ſhone in this character, why ſhould we detract from them, and exaggerate our own ſuperior faculties, whilſt they eclipſe us even in thoſe excellencies which we ſo loudly arrogate?

NOR have we only heard of one ſelected from a number, but a whole female nation, who not only excelled in manly virtues, but preſerved likewiſe the dignity and character of their own ſex. For it is recorded, that the Spartan matrons were accuſtomed to inſpect the wounds of their ſons; and if theſe appeared to have been received in an honourable advance towards the enemy, they uſed to lead the funeral proceſſion with tranſports, and to depoſite the dead in the tombs of their anceſtors: but, on the contrary, thoſe who ſeemed to be wounded in a diſhonourable retreat, were ſo far from being eſteemed by their mothers worthy of a public funeral, and the honours due to the dead, that they were privately buried. So powerful, even in female minds, is the ſenſe of honour, and the deſire of fame.

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FROM the ſame nation, there is likewiſe tranſmitted to our times the noble behaviour of a mother, who beholding her ſon transfixed with ſix mortal wounds, neither attempted to breathe one ſigh, nor took the wreath from her head, but, turning to her companions, ſpoke thus: "How much more beautiful and eligi-" ble is it for a hero to breathe out his victo-" rious ſoul in a glorious conflict, than, after " having conquered in the Olympic games, " to live poſſeſſed of all the honours attending " ſuch a conqueſt?"

ANOTHER hearing that her ſon fell in battle, ſaid, "It was for this end I bore him, that, " on a proper occaſion, he might, without re-" luctance, offer his life a willing ſacrifice to " his country."

IN what rank would you place theſe women, who, inflamed with thirſt of glory, and anxiouſly concerned for the honour of their country, preferred a noble death to every proſpect of advantage and ſecurity? What degrees of honour would be too high? what public gratulations too warm for them? Tell me, then, ſhall the Roman yield to the Spartan virtue? Equal perhaps it is, if you would not call it ſuperior.

How

How brave! how ſublime was the ſaying of Cornelia! who having now loſt twelve objects of maternal fondneſs, when ſhe ſaw her ſons Tiberius and Caius ſlain, ſaid, without the leaſt terror or dejection, "It is ſufficient to "place me above the reach of infelicity, that I "am the mother of the Gracchi." A woman truly noble, and equal even to the moſt illuſtrious of antiquity, either for the extent of her mind, or greatneſs of her ſoul: for ſhe did not yield to grief, but rather having conquered that weakneſs, by the force of her virtue, ſhe exulted in her victory, and juſtly celebrated the triumph of her own magnanimity.

COMPARED with this our wonder leſſens even at Rutilia, who having loſt her ſon Caius Cotta, in his own country, after his return from an exile into which ſhe had fondly purſued him, was not obſerved by any one to drop a tear, when ſhe ſaw him conveyed to the pile in funeral proceſſion.

SUCH likewiſe was the fortune of Clodia, who deſtined to the calamity of ſurviving her ſon Brutus, of conſular rank, bore his fate not without courage and patience.

THESE are inſtances of uncommon virtue in women, and will be thought worthy of admiration by any one who conſiders the ſoft-

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neſs and imbecillity of that ſex. But when we are informed who gave them birth, and from what glorious anceſtors they are deſcended, we naturally expect to find them equal, in every thing illuſtrious or ſublime, to their noble origin.

CAN any thing then be ſo immenſely valuable, can any advantage under heaven merit ſo much regard, that, when it is loſt, we ſhould accumulate the misfortune, by loſing likewiſe the uſe of our rational powers? If theſe have the ſmalleſt reſidence in our ſouls, they will ever teach us to rekindle our own languid virtue, by reviewing the grandeur of their progenitors; nor whilſt we contemplate the Piſones, Fabii, Bruti, and Marcelli, can we ever be forgetful who are the proper objects of our imitation, and to whom we owe our deſcent. By their arms, the boundaries of our empire were extended; by their blood, was liberty purchaſed and confirmed: it is, in ſhort, by their indefatigable toil, and inceſſant care, that the commonwealth has raiſed itſelf to a height ſo ſublime, both in martial glory and every private virtue. Theſe, theſe are the paths which every one muſt tread, who would merit praiſe by their lives, and be engaged in honourable enterpriſes, nor ſuffer themſelves to be ſeduced,

by any infatuation of mind, to immoderate grief or weakneſs.

We have named great and famous men of foreign countries, we have alſo collected a great number from our own, to whom the proſpect of death was not only diveſted of its pain and horror, but became even pleaſing and agreeable. You may likewiſe, if you pleaſe, add Theramenes, who, with the greateſt ſerenity of ſoul, having drunk a bowl of poiſon, diverted himſelf in death, and drank to Cretia with what remained in the cup. Did then a man of ſuch extenſive wiſdom and conſpicuous fame amuſe himſelf in death; and ſhall we be diſſolved in tears and lamentations, when our children and our friends undergo the ſame unavoidable viciſſitude? And whilſt we read, whilſt we treaſure in our memories, whilſt we admire the ſayings of the ancients for the wiſdom and virtue of which they are ſo expreſſive, ſhall we be ſo abſurd and inconſiſtent, as to deſpiſe the examples which the ſame perſons have left us? Shall we neglect that life which ſucceeds our impending death, whoſe duration is to eternity, whoſe entertainment is perfect happineſs, and whoſe privilege abſolute immunity from all miſery? For though the ſoul, iſſuing as from its hive, leaves the body inſenſible,

ſible, and ſtripped of every former embelliſh-ment; though, after having once paſſed the in-violable barrier, we can no more return from death to the enjoyment of our eſtates, our riches, or our power; or, as the poet ſings,

> Though, taught by barb'rous hands ſublime to riſe,
> Our ſculptur'd domes invade the diſtant ſkies,
> Whoſe op'ning valves the ſplendid ſcene diſplay
> Of gilded ceilings and apartments gay;
> From all their pomp the dead no joy receive,
> Gold ruſts, and beauty withers in the grave:

yet the ſouls of the pious ſhall poſſeſs, by an eternal and inviolable tenor, goods infinitely more ſubſtantial, and treaſures infinitely more precious; treaſures incorruptible by time, in-capable of change, above the reach of vio-lence.

But that we may dwell no longer on the examples of eminent men, nor the memory of their virtues as committed to hiſtory, let us come to what every one who has reaſon and conſciouſneſs may perceive. Let us inquire, from the experience and nature of things, what advantages, what improvements of our ſituation we may expect from death. By which manner of reaſoning and teaching, the light of truth is more eaſily and perſpicuouſly diſ-covered, and things, whether conſidered ſin-

gly, or with relation to each other, are more diſtinctly perceived. If there is any one who can obtain and ſecure a proſperous iſſue in all the affairs of life, if he has no reverſe of fortune to dread, no perſon could reprehend him if he affirmed, as he ought with juſtice, that, on a great many accounts, he preferred life to death. But ſo far from being capable of ſeparating calamity and miſery from the whole of life, there is no man exiſtent who can promiſe himſelf tranquillity and happineſs even for half an hour. Every one hopes for the fortune of Metellus; numbers wiſh to poſſeſs the kingdom, and obtain the numerous progeny of Priam: As if Metellus, rich as he was in a conſiderable family of children and grandchildren, had not been ſnatched reluctant from life, even when his proſpect of happineſs was at its height; and as if Priam, robbed of all his offspring, ſunk beneath the burden of inſupportable diſtreſs, had not fallen a victim to hoſtile hands. Theſe, if a milder deſtiny had abridged their term of life but a few years, might have been reſcued at once from numberleſs calamities, and exquiſite pains, which deſcended with bitterneſs upon their hoary heads; for this very reaſon, becauſe their period of life was prolonged beyond their deſtined

tined portion of happineſs. Hence theſe lamentable ſtrains:

I ſaw the conflagration boundleſs rage;
I ſaw the king, depreſs'd with griefs and age,
Amidſt his children's blood, his court on fire,
Beneath a barb'rous hand his ſoul expire;
I ſaw the altar of the power ſupreme
Deform'd in gore, and wrapt in hoſtile flame.

Events not only terrible to be ſeen, but bitter even when only heard off. What idea can we form of the king's diſtreſs, whom inevitable deſtiny reſerved to hear, to ſee, to feel, all this variety of wo? Would it not have been a much more favourable event for him, had he loſt his life a number of years before the arrival of ſuch adverſe occurrences?

PERHAPS it may be ſaid, that, by protracting life, he obtained many enjoyments, of which a more abrupt departure muſt have deprived him. But he would have been happily delivered, not only from evils which more than balance his enjoyments, but from cataſtrophes which have ſcarcely been exhibited in the ſcene of human nature either before or ſince his time. From all which, and many other arguments, it is clear, that men miſtake the real ſource of human happineſs, when they either

ther ſeparate felicity from death, or aſſociate miſery with it.

FROM what a complication of trouble and inconveniency did a ſudden death reſcue L. Craſſus, amongſt the moſt eminent of his time, whether conſidered as a man, or as an orator? For ſuch was his filial regard to his country, that, had he ſurvived, he muſt have felt intolerable anguiſh from the public misfortunes which ſucceeded his fate: becauſe Italy was in a conflagration of war, the ſenate inflamed with unextinguiſhable emulation; in ſhort, there was no rank of the ſtate which did not feel, even to its inmoſt eſſence, the calamities of that period. For why ſhould I rehearſe the flight of Marius? why recapitulate the other misfortunes, ſo replete with grief, ſo deſerving of commiſeration, which happened in his retreat? why recall to memory his return? that return ſo deeply ſtained with blood and murder, which no human being can recollect, without feeling his ſoul chilled, and even petrified, with ineffable horror. For I either retain in my own remembrance the impreſſion, or at leaſt from the archives of our anceſtors I can perceive, what a horrible carnage diſtinguiſhed that time: how the beſt citizens, the nobleſt patriots were ſlaughtered; how their heads

heads were cut off, and fixed on poles in the moſt conſpicuous parts of the city, who, by their eloquence, had aſcertained the dignity, and procured the ſafety of many amongſt their worthy compatriots. Many innocent and worthy characters could I enumerate, who, during that inexorable tempeſt of the commonwealth, were under a cruel neceſſity of flying at once from their lives and misfortunes, and of exploring their native liberty in the arms of death. How ſad and dreadful then was the ſtate of the commonwealth! how bitter and intolerable the conditions of life! who can recollect them without the moſt ſincere and ſenſible regret! when you might have beheld thoſe very perſons, who, at the expence of their blood and toil, had aſſiſted, increaſed, nay preſerved the republic, every where deprived of ſafety, and expecting, with dread, with horror, their impending fate, from the unnatural hands and ſwords of their own relations! Now, when you ſurvey the mournful accidents, the terrible cataſtrophes, which happen to thoſe by whoſe aſſiſtance and interpoſition you have been preſerved; whilſt you feel it out of your power by any means to become their auxiliary, or give them relief; who will aſſert, that, by perſons in theſe circumſtances, death is not

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rather to be embraced than declined? But they who, by the beneficence of Fate, have anticipated the cruel flames of ſuch a tempeſtuous period, and found an agreeable aſylum in death, muſt be univerſally and juſtly eſteemed happy. Now that L. Craſſus was one of this number, appears ſufficiently evident, from the fact itſelf, to render all other proofs deducible from eloquence or reaſon ſuperfluous.

THESE events, however, are too remote from the preſent times, to be eaſily recollected or comprehended by the mind of every one. But in the whole annals of the Roman ſtate, what is more univerſally known, what more illuſtrious and ſtriking, than the unhappy fate of my intimate friend Pompey? or what could be more conſpicuous, more exactly perceptible to every diſcerning eye, and every attentive mind? Him, if death had ſeaſonably reſcued, no evil would have purſued, no misfortune invaded. But, alas! the length of his life proved the real cauſe of his being exhibited as a ſingular ſpectacle of miſery on this theatre of ſuffering mortality; who felt the ſeverities and bitterneſs of fortune with ſo much greater weight, as he had been more ſucceſsful and happy through the whole of his former life. For who, among all the Romans, was once

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more diſtinguiſhed? Who was more illuſtrious, either in the arts of peace, the enterpriſes of war, or the poſts of honour, which, with unprecedented rapidity, were conferred upon him? On whom were the gifts of fortune, the pleaſures of friendſhip, the advantages of alliance, more profuſely accumulated? Had he been bleſſed with an agreeable and decent tranſition from life, he muſt have reached the higheſt point, the perfection of human felicity. But, from the dreadful reverſe which he ſuffered, we may ſee how extenſive is the power of vindictive fortune in the revolutions of life; unleſs we rather imagine all poſſible evils, all diſagreeable viciſſitudes, to be the hard terms of our exiſtence here, and natural to a ſtate of being, too painful, too much the object of compaſſion at its beſt. For he who had enjoyed the moſt diſtinguiſhed proſperity, who had been accuſtomed to nothing but projecting the nobleſt plans and entertaining the moſt extenſive wiſhes, who poſſeſſed all the advantages and pleaſures of life even to ſuperfluity, entered into hoſtilities againſt his father-in-law; he deſerted his houſe, he fled from Italy: And though, in his former wars, he had purſued no enterpriſe but with exact prudence and conſummate wiſdom; yet when the force of

his genius, the extent of his intellectual powers ought to have been uncommonly exerted, and appeared in their higheſt luſtre, even then he had almoſt forgot himſelf. In this unlucky juncture, he did not heſitate to oppoſe the ſtrongeſt and beſt diſciplined legions in the Roman army, with troops effeminate in their nature, cowardly in their diſpoſitions, new to war, and collected at random. Thus his army being loſt, his camp taken, and himſelf ingloriouſly conquered, this great man fell into the hands of ſlaves. But how unhappily he was deprived of life, it is unneceſſary to relate; as perhaps it was the greateſt alleviation of his miſery, that, after having fallen into ſuch deep and complicated wretchedneſs, his fate did not linger, but was precipitant. Happy would his exit have proved, had he departed whilſt he was eminent in the ſtate; when, by the favour of his country, his perſonal authority and political influence were extenſive; when wealth and abundance ſeemed to court his acceptance. Not would it alone be impoſſible for the moſt exuberant pen to deſcribe, but even for the moſt fruitful imagination to conceive, what deep diſtreſs, what ineffable miſery, his protracted life ſubjected him to ſuſtain.

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HAVING therefore irrefragably evinced and eſtabliſhed this maxim, that death frequently proves a happy and a ſeaſonable refuge, not only becauſe it introduces us to a ſtate of exquiſite and immutable felicity, but likewiſe becauſe it delivers us from the pangs of ſuch complicated and bitter adverſity as may ariſe from our preſent ſituation, or kindly reſcues us from ſuch griefs and calamities as may impend; what reaſon can be aſſigned why we ſhould not rejoice from our ſouls at the proſpect of expiring, and imitate the immoveable conſtancy of ſuch great men, as are not diſconcerted by the fate of any one? Did not L. Brutus eſteem death the beſt and happieſt acquiſition, when, in repulſing the tyrant whom he had formerly baniſhed, he thought life a ſmall ſacrifice for the liberty of his country? Were not theſe likewiſe the ſentiments of the Decii, who, in an engagement with the Latins for the freedom and happineſs of their native city, offered their voluntary boſoms to the weapons of the enemy, and fell the ſelf-devoted victims of glory and liberty? Did not theſe divine impreſſions, theſe exalted motives, likewiſe animate Scipio, Paulus, Marcellus, and Albinus, whom the records of human nature will ever diſtinguiſh, for being

nobly prodigal of life in the field of battle, when their country's cauſe demanded ſuch a tribute!

Nor has life any attractions to prevent it from being deſpiſed by men of ſublime and elevated ſouls, in purſuit of eternal and immaculate renown; for ſurely the everlaſting praiſe and admiration of all rational beings is more than ſufficient to recompenſe the momentary pains of death, if at all they deſerve that name. For though we formerly mentioned this topic, that the dying either ſuffer very little uneaſineſs, or none at all; yet as, at that time, we only hinted the ſubject, it may here be proper to reſume the matter, and treat it more diffuſely. Nor does the maxim of that perſon appear to me abſurd, who affirmed, that the different ſtates and ſituations of the dying and the dead, might be clearly perceived and apprehended from two circumſtances: One of theſe, according to him, is a period of profound and unconſcious ſleep; the other, that which is antecedent to our birth. And in reality this is the caſe, that, of all falſe opinions by which the vulgar are miſled, none approaches nearer to truth than the notions which they entertain of death, diſcovered in their conduct, when conſidered relative to that critical tranſition: For many live in ſuch a manner, as moſt effectually to

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enjoy preſent advantages ; nor do they trouble themſelves in exploring futurity, that they may anticipate what agreeable and diſagreeable contingencies ſhall attend themſelves or others. They are therefore frequently tormented with unexpected diſeaſes of body, or unforeſeen vexations and perturbations of ſpirit. But the laſt event of life, upon which their meditations ought particularly to be fixed, they ſeldom recollect, as if at all relative to them, or as if they were in the leaſt intereſted in it. Theſe, as Panætius relates the apothegm of Africanus, were like ſtubborn horſes, who ſhould be conſigned to the hands of ſevere diſcipline, that, by degrees, they might learn to obey, and acquire more gentleneſs and manſuetude. In the ſame manner, theſe inflexible patients of wiſdom and virtue, ſhould be checked, impelled, and whirled around the ring, till they have confirmed thoſe habits of patience and fortitude, that may enable them, if death ſhould take them by ſurpriſe, to ſuſtain it without terror or dejection.

I KNOW not, however, by what faſcination of pleaſure and luxury, human life and manners have inſenſibly declined from that ſacred integrity, that inviolable rectitude, obſerved by our anceſtors ; and are at length ſo effectually depraved,

depraved, that nothing is leſs the object of common concern than truth: nor are we conſcious in any of our tranſactions, whether virtue will authoriſe them or not; than which no plague more incurable, no curſe more dreadful could have infeſted human life, alas! already too much degenerated. And if in any characters at all, certainly in thoſe which have now been drawn, the common maxim will be found ſtrictly true and accurately conceived. For in what mighty actions are theſe triflers engaged, unleſs to conſume whole days in idleneſs and folly; ſo that their exiſtence here, may rather be called *a convulſive dream*, than *real life*. For as he who ſlumbers perceives nothing, does nothing, is concerned in nothing; ſo it will not be eaſy to conceive what the dead can feel, perform, or regard. Thus, in poetical legends, we are told, that when any one was uncommonly dear to Heaven, he was lulled by the Immortals into a profound ſleep, that they might intercept the ſhock of ſome inevitable calamity, which, if awake, he muſt have felt in all its bitterneſs. If therefore dying be like ſleeping, every night is to us a temporary death; and if, in theſe moments of profound repoſe, no ſenſibility remains, by analogy we may ſafely and certainly conclude, that there is no ſenſibility

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of corporeal pain or pleaſure in the grave: which, as it is plain to common ſenſe, ſo neither can we doubt the other poſition, ſince, to us, the period that precedes our birth, cannot be different from that which ſucceeds our diſſolution; and the ſtate of him who has not been, muſt be the ſame with that of him who was, and is no more. Becauſe, ſince death can have no relation to him whoſe exiſtence has not yet commenced, ſo neither can it in the leaſt concern him who is already expired. Nay, even in the criſis of dying, it is either of little moment, or none at all, ſince its empire is confined to ſo ſhort a ſpace, ſuch a limited ſucceſſion of indiviſible inſtants, that ſhould it be diſpoſed to heighten or protract its malignity, this procedure would be found impracticable. What then ſhall we think concerning the unmeaning exaggerations of thoſe, who continually tell us, what pangs, what convulſions, they dread in death? Yet, after all, I ſee not how they can do otherwiſe; for ſince man can die but once, it is not to be expected that they who are ignorant of the paſſage from life, nor have ever explored the undiſcovered country, from whoſe confines no traveller returns, can clearly perceive or determine whether death be a good or an evil.

THEY ſay, that the dying are excruciated, convulſed, diſtorted with anguiſh, which, in ſome caſes, may poſſibly have been ſeen and obſerved; as the heavings, tremours, and convulſive ſtarts appearing in the frame, ſeem to be ſymptoms of agony. And perhaps theſe animadverſions might merit ſome regard, if the appearances then exhibited were found to be really ſignificant of what is felt in death. For if in death the body were tormented, and agonizing with ſuch intolerable pangs, as obliged it to exhibit ſuch terrible ſigns of painful ſenſation, it would not certainly be denied, that death itſelf gives no ſmall degree of torture. But ſince this bitterneſs and anguiſh is only the portion of a few, whoſe lives have been one ſcene of riot and intemperance, one ſucceſſion of criminal perpetrations and execrable wickedneſs, we can no longer heſitate in concluding, that the agitations of ſuch wretches are not cauſed by the pangs of death, but by the ſharper pangs, the more inſupportable hell of conſcious guilt; from that accurſed ſource is derived their impatient ſolicitude, their intenſe deſpair. For they who vainly flattered themſelves that they were ſuperior to the lot of mortality, nor could believe themſelves expiring even when the grim tyrant knocked at

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their hearts, are not ſo much affected with the pains of death, as enraged to be dragged, reluctant, from life; in which, as they have been proſperous and ſucceſsful even to their moſt ſanguine wiſhes, it is natural and unavoidable for them to fear, that, in death, they ſhall experience the moſt dreadful alternatives, the fierceſt extremes of adverſe fate. But to the good, who habitually think and talk of death as a placid and ſerene harbour from the tempeſt of life, and who have frequently and ardently deſired to eſcape, by the beneficent interpoſition of Fate, from the ſtorms and hurricanes of a tumultuous and fluctuating world, to them nothing can be more delightful, nothing more pleaſing, than the hopes, the very name of death. And in them we may plainly perceive the interventions of Heaven, which ſupport them in the kindeſt and moſt admirable manner. Thus you will find a number of thoſe who have lived the faithful adherents of virtue and goodneſs, not only departing from life with little pain, which is the general wiſh, but even free from every uneaſineſs, without heſitation: Amongſt which number let me mention Q. Fabius, who, after having obtained the conſulſhip, when he ſaluted in the ſenate-houſe thoſe who paſſed, ſo far from ſuffering, ſo far

from feeling any thing diſagreeable, he even left the world in viſible tranſport and exultation. The ſame event happened to A. Pompey whilſt he ſacrificed in the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus, and likewiſe to Thalnas the conſul when ſupplicating the immortal Gods. What pain can you imagine that they felt, even in the very criſis of diſſolution, who, immediately before, diſcovered the greateſt chearfulneſs and ſpirit, and who, in the very inſtant of time when they died, exhibited no ſymptoms of dejection, nor uttered the leaſt word ſignificant of regret?

You tell me, They are abſorbed, annihilated in death. I anſwer, They were men diſtinguiſhed for virtue and wiſdom, on whom the benignity of Heaven beſtowed the favour of death, as an entrance to a better and happier life; which perhaps, in the omniſcient eye, might appear more acceptable to them, as ſent at a period when they had little reaſon to hope, much leſs to expect ſo great a good. For as death depends entirely on the Divine Will, it can never be in the power of man to chuſe at what hour, and in what ſituation he would moſt ardently wiſh to breathe his laſt.

Nor is it true, which ſome maintain, that the fixed hour, the critical moment of diſſolu-

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tion is determined for human nature in general, by divine decree, beyond which it cannot paſs, nor ſtop on this ſide, whilſt the lives of particular perſons may be protracted or abridged by their negligence, intemperance, or other contingencies. For as this is moſt certain, that the utmoſt limit of life is pre-determined by God, which it is impoſſible for any one to remove or elude; thus none can certainly affirm, that the ſame hour, the ſame termination of life is deſtined for all. And indeed ſhould we acknowledge this principle, there would be no reaſon for aſcribing to any man, either prudence, temperance, or piety; for all the virtues, if ſuch a conſequence be properly deduced, would be not only quite uſeleſs, but abſolutely chimerical. For how could any man exert prudence? why ſhould he practiſe the diſcipline of reſtraint? where is the neceſſity of regulating his ſenſual appetites, if he is mechanically directed in the ſame career, to the ſame goal of life, which is common to all his brethren? You will tell me, he is endued with theſe virtues, that, by them, he may prolong his life; but if the term of life is pre-eſtabliſhed by Fate, it muſt for that reaſon be immutable. If, however, our final period be in any degree influenced by ſpontaneous agency and human volition,

there can be no reaſon why any one ſhould affirm, that the ſame period is pre-ordained by God for all.

But concerning theſe metaphyſical intricacies, let every one adopt what opinion he pleaſes: What is moſt agreeable to truth, God only knows. In my apprehenſion, our nature is not indulged with *data* ſufficient to decide the the queſtion with abſolute certainty. Let us only fix this, that there is no pain in death; but that it is productive of ſuch advantages and enjoyments to man, as perhaps, though they may be hoped for by many, can yet be comprehended by none. It is therefore impreſſed on the human mind, by a divine impulſe, that as often as it feels the bitterneſs of misfortune, it not only wiſhes for death with all its ardour, but even importunes Heaven, with premeditated petitions, to obtain that happy immunity. Why ſhould it be ſo, unleſs this were a plain declaration of nature, extorted by ſenſation and experience, proclaiming the utility and advantages of death? But it ſeems to be engraven by the hands of its Author on the human intellect, that there can be no evil, no bitterneſs in death. Nor are the inſtinctive impulſes of ſelf-preſervation, ſince only deſigned for temporary purpoſes, any objection to this.

this. When, therefore, pain exagitates, or grief depreſſes our ſpirits, we earneſtly ſolicit death, and deſire it with our whole ſouls, as the only poſſible reſource of ſufferings and afflictions.

But the topic of which I now treat gives me an opportunity that ought not to paſs unimproved; for ſince it has been eſtabliſhed, that no perſon ought to be much diſturbed with death, may we not with much better reaſon contend, that theſe ought leaſt of all to be moved, who have it in their power to conſole themſelves by a death glorioufly obtained? For that life ought to be eſteemed ſufficiently long which concludes with honour; and they who, during their ſojourn in this world, have inflexibly held the paths of virtue, are not only in their exit purſued with applauſe, but even with eternal pleaſure and delight; and, in proportion as we have exerted our power in the performance of our duty, or in diſcharging the offices of life with honour, ſo much more intenſely ſhall the ſoul be tranſported and elevated with theſe heavenly ſenſations. For ſurely as man was originally formed for rectitude of action, and on that account adorned and inveſted with a degree of reaſon ſuperior to all the other participants of animal life in this world,

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there can be no other ſource from whence he ought to explore the true eſtimate of his character, or derive the moſt exquiſite pleaſures of his being, than from a courſe of virtuous actions. Is it poſſible that he can forget whence his origin is deduced? Certainly he can neither be unmindful of the dignity of his extract, and the nature of his frame, nor die with anguiſh and regret, who having paſſed a life of integrity and honour, leaves the impreſſions of his exiſtence and virtues deep in the ſouls of all who knew him. With what divine rapture, what ineffable tranſports muſt we imagine the virtuous ſoul exults, when emancipated from the galling chains, the tenacious fetters of her corporeal priſon, ſhe ſoars on high to regain her congenial abode, her native element, the regions of eternal light and glory, from whence ſhe deſcended! For certainly our ſouls are emanations of the Divine Mind, confined and ſtruggling in this terreſtrial maſs, whoſe dead and inactive weight checks their native elaſticity, oppreſſed with corporeal organs: But when, diſengaged from matter, they return to their congenial habitations, then indeed they are conſcious of real and immortal life: nor are they longer ſubjected to the deſpotiſm of relentleſs pain, ſordid pleaſure, or ungratified deſire;

deſire; but, bleſſed with the full and complete poſſeſſion of themſelves, they are tormented by no contingency, importuned by no want, paſſive to nothing, but moving and actuating every thing.

WITH propriety is it therefore ſaid, that the body is mere earth, the ſoul celeſtial and immortal flame; a truth which the virtuous lives of great men, and their noble actions, ſufficiently teſtify. For how ſhould the man who thinks himſelf born to no higher inheritance than thoſe mortal and turbid elements, which he touches with his hands, or ſpurns with his feet, be able to deſpiſe the accommodations and advantages of his preſent ſtate? How ſhould he be proof to the allurements of ſenſual pleaſure, or ſhed his blood in the cauſe of virtue, and purſuit of honour?

HENCE it muſt be falſe, that the whole man can be equally ſubject to mortality; for as the body is a mere concretion of earth, it muſt feel the attraction of earthly poſſeſſions and enjoyments, till it returns to the boſom of its maternal element. But the heaven-deſcended ſoul, by its native tendency, aſpires to things that are immortal and heavenly; nor are its aims and wiſhes circumſcribed by the ſame narrow limits with thoſe of the body.

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IT can therefore never be ſaid to taſte the ſweets of real life, nor enjoy abſolute and inviolable repoſe, whilſt impriſoned in the body. Like a reluctant captive, it regrets the chains of its terreſtrial dungeon, and the pollution of matter. What a ſacred change! how important a revolution of our exiſtence! to be at once delivered from the toils and adverſities of life! to be wrapped in the boſom of tranquillity, amidſt the painful viciſſitudes, the circling calamities which involved us! and as if eſcaped from the ſevere durance, the intolerable ſervitude of life, to regain the habitations of boundleſs freedom and profuſe delight! For to theſe divine anticipations we muſt refer the ſentiments of philoſophers, when they diſcourſe concerning the ſacred tranquillity of the pious, and the ſupreme beatitude, which, after their departure from this world, they are ſaid ſo completely and perpetually to enjoy: who as they underſtood that men were not created and placed here by blind or undeſigning contingency, nor that the ſame retribution could be juſtly given to men of worth and virtue, (who having drained the bitter cup of adverſity, expired in the midſt of pangs), as to theſe wretches whoſe deſires are fixed, nay whoſe very ſouls are for ever intent upon projecting

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and perpetrating the moſt deteſtable wickedneſs; for this reaſon, they could not imagine, that the ſame ſerene and gentle exit from life, nor the ſame glory and felicity after death, was promiſcuouſly beſtowed on both.

LET me therefore indulge the dear recollection, let my ſoul imbibe all the refreſhment and conſolation with which it is pregnant, ſince I am conſcious that my dear departed daughter, whoſe virtues at once deſerved and juſtified the higheſt degree of paternal fondneſs, lived in ſuch a manner, that neither the purity of her morals, nor the extent of her wiſdom, could admit any acceſſion; and in ſuch a manner too ſhe died, that, on the rack of nature, in the moſt excruciating pangs of childbirth, which produced her final catastrophe, ſhe diſcovered the moſt unſhaken fortitude, the nobleſt exaltation of ſoul: which remembrance, though not quite diveſted of all its bitterneſs, is yet mingled with ſenſations of comfort and ſatisfaction, as it occurs when the tide of grief is in its ebb, though ſtill the ſurges have not quite forgot to ſwell. How indeed ſhould my ſituation be different, ſince my lovely child could ſuffer no evil in death? nor was my affliction incongruous to nature, but ſuch as all who feel the lot of humanity

might partake. Why ſhould its emotions diſturb and agitate my ſoul with ſorrow, beyond what a ſuſceptible nature ought to diſcover? What therefore remains for me? ſince, under the kind tuition, and by the gracious aſſiſtance of Heaven, ſhe has nobly performed the part aſſigned her here below; What? but to transfer my wiſhes, my contemplations, nay my ſoul itſelf, to that ſublimer and happier ſtate of exiſtence, which I now believe ſhe enjoys, in every conſcious power; which I believe, did I ſay? let me retract the faint aſſertion, let me give way to truth, and boldly affirm, that I feel it.

THIS meditation will for ever be a ſource of more intenſe and copious pleaſure to my heart, as the ſtate which ſhe now unqueſtionably enjoys in its perfection, is more ſublime and exalted than the moſt refined and enlarged felicity compatible with human life. For what portion of good may not the dear deceaſed be thought to merit, whoſe intentions and actions had no tincture, no participation of evil; and who ſuffered the pains, the misfortunes to which in life ſhe was expoſed, with a diſpoſition ſo patient and reſigned, that her acquieſcence in the will of Heaven was no leſs habitually diſcovered in adverſe than in proſper-

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ous occurrences; whilſt, in the fulneſs of her ſoul, ſhe poured forth her ſincere acknowledgments to the immortal Gods for both? And though her whole heart and underſtanding were employed in fulfilling the great and important ends of virtue; yet, pleaſed with the enjoyment of conſcious worth alone, ſhe did not oſtentatiouſly exert her beneficence, but, with ſincere and unaſſuming modeſty, declined the praiſe and approbation which ſhe merited.

MUST I not therefore think, that ſo pure a ſpirit was highly acceptable to the Deity, and bleſſed with his full approbation; ſince in life it was ſo little influenced by ſelfiſh regards, ſo conſtantly and ardently ſolicitous to cultivate and improve its own rectitude, and to perform the great taſks of humanity and juſtice, as the ſole end of its exiſtence; in whom the living and viſible portraiture of virtue appeared, not as we frequently ſee it, the reſult of laborious hypocriſy and falſe imitation, but ſuch as it ſhines in Heaven, genuine, deep, and ſubſtantial? For as the benignity of nature ſo kindly and juſtly had tempered her frame, that ſhe purſued whatever was beautiful or fit in human conduct with a ſpontaneous motion, and innate propenſity; yet, not contented with this favourable conſtitution, ſhe endeavoured, by

the utmoſt exertions of reaſon, the moſt invariable attention to wiſdom, that ſhe might be able to render theſe faithful impulſes of nature unneceſſary. Whoever, therefore, had more nearly explored the manners which ſhe adopted, and the plan of life which ſhe purſued; whoever had obſerved her conſummate prudence in the government of her family, her manly genius in all the affairs of life, her profound and comprehenſive learning, would have acknowledged, that ſhe wanted none of thoſe advantages ſo loudly arrogated by our aſſuming ſex, which are either diſcovered in the eſtimation and diſcernment of things in general, or in the proper and exact diſcharge of domeſtic adminiſtration. Hence it was, that in prudence and magnanimity, virtues which we ourſelves, with all our maſculine vanity, too frequently want, ſhe, though a woman, ſo eminently excelled, that, far from purſuing extrinſic remedies for her grief, looking within herſelf for all her reſources, on her own virtue alone ſhe depended, and by her own virtue alone ſhe was ſuſtained.

FARTHER, as the diſeaſes of the ſoul are more ſevere, more permanent than thoſe of the body, ſo much ought our ſurpriſe to increaſe, when we find a woman, a ſoft and delicate woman,

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ſuperior to every corporeal infirmity by her fortitude, and to every perturbation of mind by her wiſdom. Hence it was, that though her filial ſympathy for the calamities of her father, though the uneaſineſs which ſhe ſuffered from the diſorders of the times were great, yet never could my watchful tenderneſs perceive her mind diſconcerted, nor her ſpirit dejected. Her ſoul deeply felt the regret of her father's baniſhment, ſhe partook the ſorrow diffuſed through her whole family, ſhe ſaw with afflicted eyes the confiſcation of my fortune; but, with tender aſſiduity, ſhe conſtantly aſſiſted her mother in every exigence, by the wiſeſt deliberations and matureſt advices; nay, even when the poſture of our affairs appeared moſt critical and dangerous, ſhe did not heſitate to inſpire her relations with hopes of my return. Our common diſtreſs, therefore, was not a more exuberant ſource of bitterneſs and wo, than the pleaſure and ſatisfaction which we conſtantly felt from the unruffled ſweetneſs, the exquiſite ſenſibility, the ſympathetic piety of a child ſo dearly beloved.

WERE my heart to conſult its own intereſt and conveniency, did I liſten to the dictates of paternal affection, the pleadings of nature which are ſo ſtrongly and univerſally felt, ſurely

ly I muſt have wiſhed that pleaſure and ſatiſfaction ſtill continued: but when I revolve in my breaſt, her freedom from the chains of the body, her exemption from all poſſible miſery, the ſecure poſſeſſion of eternal being, I not only feel the throbs of paternal regret ſubſide, but even contemplate her improved ſituation with heartfelt joy. For what more delightful idea can I indulge, whilſt my reaſon tells me that my ſoul is immortal, than in reflecting with firm perſuaſion, that my daughter ſhall for ever exiſt, and for ever participate every ſublime enjoyment of which intelligent beings are capacious and ſuſceptible?

Now, that the ſoul is immortal, I muſt believe without heſitation; nor am I unwilling to collect the ſentiments of the wiſe and comtemplative upon this important ſubject, ſince the current of my ideas has inſenſibly tranſported me to it. Nor do I imagine the opinion ſo weakly ſupported by reaſon, that it ſhould be neceſſary to call in ſuch auxiliary arguments as theſe, that there ſtill remains, even in the bodies of the dead, ſuch ſignatures of beauty and dignity, ſuch impreſſions of indefatigable energy, as muſt inſpire us with veneration, and, inſtead of inducing us to think that the ſoul ultimately periſhes with the body, rather ſeem to ſignify,

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that the body is her living tomb, and that ſhe remains in a ſtate of ſepulture, whilſt her powers are envelopped in its darkneſs and inactivity; as if it were not plain from numberleſs and convincing arguments, that he who maintains the ſoul to be only coeval with the body, and involved in the ſame ruin, combats the whole force of reaſon, without being ſupported by any one rational deduction.

BUT were it neceſſary to ſupport this principle by authority, what name more important, more venerable, could I ſelect, than his whom Apollo himſelf pronounced the wiſeſt of men? whoſe declared and fixed opinion it was, that the ſouls of men were divine intelligences, and that, when emancipated from the body, they return to that heaven whence they originally deſcended. This, in every converſation, he firmly and invariably aſſerted; in which he agreed with thoſe philoſophers, whom antiquity diſtinguiſhed by the name of the *Italic School*, and on whom it beſtowed high marks of eſteem. Amongſt them it was a fixed and unqueſtionable tenet, that the human ſoul was of celeſtial origin; and that ſhe was not only a gift, but even a real and intimate part of the eternal and all-productive Mind.

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NOR, if any one ſhould think otherwiſe, would he find it eaſy to invalidate the powerful and numerous arguments which ſupport this doctrine. For thus it may be perceived and concluded, even with the evidence of ſenſible perception, that there is in the ſoul an inexpreſſible energy, an almoſt incredible velocity, by whoſe aſſiſtance, with a glance of thought, and in the ſame indiviſible inſtant of time, ſhe can not only comprehend, but project, revolve, and digeſt ſuch a courſe of action, as the body cannot accompliſh in a ſucceſſion of months; months did I ſay? nay not even in revolutions of years.

BUT if this ſhould appear wonderful, why may we not explore the treaſures of memory with increaſing ſurpriſe? Is it not ſtill more ſtrange, that the ſoul ſhould be able to collect and comprehend a ſeries of events, ſo infinite, ſo complex, and deduced from ſuch remote antiquity? that, by exerting her viſual powers, ſhe can pervade the awful gloom that intercepts the determinations of Fate from our view, and preſage what ſhall happen; nay that, like the omniſcient Mind, ſhe can unite, and almoſt comprehend, the paſt, the preſent, and the future, in one unbounded proſpect. Who that feels and recogniſes theſe qualities in his

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own ſoul, can doubt that ſhe is of divine extraction? and, if ſo, muſt he not alſo confeſs, that whatever partakes the divine nature is immortal and imperiſhable; ſince, particularly from two attributes eſſential to mind, its inextinguiſhable nature may be certainly inveſtigated, and clearly perceived?

One of theſe is, a principle of intrinſic activity, a power of beginning and continuing motion, which muſt be acknowledged inherent in the ſoul, and even conſtituent of her being. For as ſhe is moved by her own innate force, nor borrows the firſt impulſe of motion from without, like other mechanical agents; and as the higheſt marks of inceſſant activity are evidently perceptible, ſince, even whilſt the body is in the profoundeſt ſleep, the ſoul is aſſiduouſly and apparently exerted; for this reaſon the divinity of its eſſence, and the eternity of its duration, cannot admit the ſmalleſt doubt.

This concluſion the whole force of reaſon, this the ultimate tendency of things, unavoidably extort. For ſurely the ſoul is an image of God, the participant of his nature, and the product of his power. But if God himſelf, by the neceſſity of his nature, enjoys immortality, why ſhould he decree, that a part which he ſpontaneouſly abſtracted from himſelf ſhould

be mortal? By this very inſtance then, he has thought proper to diſplay the pre-eminence of divine power, that he is not only eſſentially immortal himſelf, but capable of inveſting other beings with his own nature, and of making them alſo, by that participation, immortal.

NEVERTHELESS he determined that the body ſhould be mortal. Nor was that conſtitution improper, as it takes its riſe from earth, to whoſe tranſmutations all ſublunary forms are ſubjected, and, when the courſe of life is finiſhed, muſt reſolve into the ſame element. But the ſoul being of divine origin, inceſſantly aſpires to heaven as its natal clime; for it conſtantly wiſhes to repoſſeſs that habitation from whence it had formerly departed.

IF, however, it is a property eſſential to either of the two, that it ſhould gravitate to earth as its ultimate repoſe, it muſt peculiarly be the property of the body. But the ſoul, by its natural tendency, muſt explore an eternal habitation in heaven, for heaven is the country of ſouls: becauſe no modification of matter can give birth to mind, ſince there is nothing in it which indicates its exiſtence reſulting from mixture, from concretion, or from any artificial and temporary compoſition of parts; ſo

that,

that, in its whole frame, not one quality can be found, which intimates its ſtructure and formation to be terreſtrial. Nor has it the leaſt analogy with the fluidity of water, the elaſticity of air, or the corroſive violence of fire; for in theſe eſſences, however modified, there is not the leaſt ray of intelligence, reflection, or memory. Now theſe qualities are neceſſarily conſtituent of mind, by whoſe operations ſhe retains the paſt, preſages the future, and comprehends the preſent, which are attributes of Deity alone; nor can we conceive whence man could derive them, unleſs from God himſelf. The nature and energy of the ſoul are therefore abſolutely peculiar, and entirely different from theſe exiſtences and powers which are familiar to our obſervation, and communicated by our external ſenſes.

WHATEVER therefore it is which is endued with the powers of perception and volition, in which the principles of health and activity are inherent, this muſt derive its origin from heaven, this muſt participate the divine nature, and, by neceſſary conſequence, be immortal. Nor can God himſelf, whoſe exiſtence and perfections we conclude from the frame of nature and our own, be conceived in any other manner, than as an omnipreſent

mind; whoſe operations are boundleſs and free; whoſe contexture is incapable of diviſibility, like other temporary beings which ſubſiſt by the concretion of diſſoluble parts; which perceives and communicates motion to every thing, but is itſelf endued with endleſs and indefatigable energy. To the human ſoul therefore, which is an emanation of his own nature, we muſt conclude, that he has communicated the ſame eternity.

Nor will its deſigning powers, its wonderful exertions, lead us to any other determination, but that its nature is divine, and its duration endleſs. Why elſe do we project plans, and exert deſires, ſo far beyond the limits of our preſent ſtate? For whether we chuſe to conſider the extent and magnificence of elegant buildings, or the laborious productions of genius and learning, or the immenſe quantity of money beſtowed in procuring ſuch acquiſitions as are eſteemed moſt permanent and eſtabliſhed in their nature, or our avidity of extenſive, multiplied, and durable poſſeſſions, we may certainly infer, that no man would either conceive, or labour to accompliſh ſuch enterpriſes, unleſs he was perſuaded, that not only a long ſeries of time, but even eternity itſelf was the inheritance of his being. Nay, the very inſatiable

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deſire of everlaſting fame, the inextinguiſhable thirſt of honour, the aſſiduous purſuit of wealth and influence, evidently ſhow that the ſoul of man extends her proſpect even to boundleſs futurity; nor circumſcribes her deſires by the wants and gratifications of animal life, like other beings of inferior rank, but eſteems theſe purſuits as abject, contemptible, and only ſuitable to the limits of a momentary and contingent exiſtence.

WHAT ſhall we think of theſe ſublime and pre-eminent qualities, which are indulged to no other creature that lives upon earth but man alone? On him alone is beſtowed the power of contemplating heaven and celeſtial things: it is his peculiar province to explore the depths of knowledge, and enjoy its diſcoveries, which either contribute to the culture and improvement of his virtue, or to the detection of theſe laws that regulate the revolutions of the ſun and other heavenly bodies; or to preſerve the memory of remote antiquity, and make the proper application of ſuch improvements as have been obtained in the obſcureſt parts of ſcience. Are not theſe plain indications of the ſoul's divinity? Do not their extent and importance obviouſly ſhow, that the nature which they inveſt muſt be derived from

from heaven, ſince it has imbibed ſo liberal a portion of celeſtial excellence?

CAN we imagine, if the ſoul were deſtined to ſink in a gloomy annihilation when the body dies, that the beſt and wiſeſt of men would reſign their lives with ſuch equality of temper, while profligates and fools ſhiver on the verge of time with ſuch ineffable horror, ſuch deep regret? It is ſaid, that Socrates, even to his laſt moment, entertained his friends and diſciples with an account of the ſerene receſs, the happy immortality, which attend the good and pious; and that, animated by theſe proſpects, he drank the poiſoned cup with as much chearfulneſs and alacrity, as if he had not been expelled to the ſilence and darkneſs of the tomb, but called to aſſume the ſplendor and dignity of ſovereign empire. Yet they whoſe ſouls are prone to earth, and grovelling in the duſt, whoſe thoughts never riſe above its ſordid purſuits and contemptible pleaſures, are invariably obſerved to ſhow the moſt inflexible repugnance, the moſt ungraceful averſion in their departure from life. Nor is this conduct unnatural, whilſt, as the ſcene of immortality opens to their immediate proſpect, they already feel the rack of inconceivable anguiſh, and anticipate thoſe eternal puniſhments which are

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the conſequences of a guilty and flagitious life.

When we contemplate the inattention of man to thoſe latent prepoſſeſſions of immortality, which are ſo legible in a number of their actions, may we not juſtly exclaim, "O "fools! O ignorant of what concerns you moſt, "even the dignity and glory of your nature!" ſince it can be hid from no attentive ſpectator, that the funeral obſequies, deifications, and other ſacred rites tranſmitted from our anceſtors, were plainly, nay articulately expreſſive of the ſoul's everlaſting exiſtence. Nor would they have worſhipped the dead with ſuch divine honours, nor handed down from generation to generation ſuch a multiplicity and variety of ſepulchral rites, unleſs from a firm and intuitive perſuaſion that the ſoul ſurvived in death, and that the whole man was not overwhelmed in the wrecks of the body.

Hence they ſeem to have determined, that death was not the ultimate ſcene in the human drama, nor followed by the abſolute and final extinction of our being; but that it was rather the province of that ſable herald to receive, in their exit, thoſe who live agreeably to the laws of God and nature, that he might introduce them to more ſubſtantial, permanent, and exalted

alted happineſs. For whoever have lived congruous to the dictates of nature, nor are impreſſed with the ſtains which men too early and deeply contract from the corrupted cuſtoms and manners of the world; ſtains that obſcure the ſacred and informing radiance originally kindled by the breath of God in the human boſom, by producing, nouriſhing, and confirming every vice; theſe, whether they live or die, muſt be conſigned, by the decree of the Almighty, to glory and virtue. For this is not only conſonant with the matureſt determinations of reaſon, but founded on eternal truth and invariable equity. For to whom can the tuition and guardianſhip of equity be more ſacred, than to the divine mind, from whoſe unchangeable ideas it reſults?

SINCE therefore man alone, of all inferior conſcious beings, is capacitated, by exploring his own and other natures, in ſome meaſure to diſcover the divine exiſtence and perfections; as his kindred to divinity muſt be nearer, ſo if he has not rendered himſelf obnoxious to divine wrath, by a life of guilt and pollution, he muſt ſurely return to God, from whence he came. Nor is there a ſtronger or more convincing argument for human immortality than that man participates the divine intelli-

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gence, and, from theſe impreſſions of wiſdom, goodneſs, and juſtice, which are legible in the moral and material world, can inveſtigate the will of their glorious Architect and Superintendant, in ſuch a manner, that though he were born in the moſt ſavage and inhoſpitable deſert, yet, by the impulſes and diſcipline of nature, he could not doubt that God exiſts, nor that he is the ſupreme object of worſhip and veneration.

WHAT a ſublime diſcovery is this! how muſt it fill the rational ſoul with aſtoniſhment! and how might it cover inferior natures with bluſhes, if they were ſuſceptible of thoſe ſenſations, to find that man is connected by an intimate and indiſſoluble relation with God! and that there is no percipient being upon earth, ſave man alone, endued with the knowledge of its Creator; nor is there any other creature under heaven informed by a living, active, and intelligent ſpirit, an irradiation of the divine mind.

CAN man, therefore, be ſo impenetrably blind, ſo invincibly ignorant of his filial relation, that he ſhould induſtriouſly avoid a tranſition which reconducts him to his father and his God; for we can conclude death to be nothing elſe, but a migration to a ſublime and

heavenly abode: nor is this only proved by ſuch deductions as ariſe from our notions of truth and equity, but likewiſe by the firmeſt and moſt unanimous conſent of the wiſe and good.

And if there are any who live in ſuch a manner, as to be in endleſs diſcord with their own internal conſtitution, ſuch it would highly become to reflect, that this terreſtrial orb itſelf, and every thing elſe beneath the canopy of heaven, is governed by the divine will; which as it has impreſſed eſtabliſhed laws on the inanimate creation, as it actuates and regulates ſenſative beings of an inferior rank by inſtinctive principles, muſt certainly have preſcribed ſome rule of action to be aſſiduouſly acquired, and inviolably obſerved by its intelligent offſpring.

Besides, that we may be reconciled with a fate compoſed of oppoſite extremes, let us conſider, that certain viciſſitudes appear to be exhibited through the whole frame of nature. For will any one aſſert, that he has beheld the earth fertile and productive every year, or ſeen her boſom always covered with the richeſt and moſt liberal crops, nor ever teeming with noxious or uſeleſs weeds? Who can affirm, from his own obſervations, that, in their ſeaſon, animals are always pregnant, and always prolific of a numerous

numerous and healthy race, without the leaſt interval of barrenneſs? But ſince theſe contradictory phenomena are univerſally perceived; and ſince, in human affairs, it is not permitted to wiſh for any thing perpetually exempt from fluctuation, and permanent in its nature; why ſhould we expect that human nature will be free from theſe alternatives and diverſities which prevail through the whole material and animal creation?

If man has lived for a number of years in proſperity; if, after the acquiſition of diſtinguiſhed honours, accumulated wealth, and a promiſing family, he is long indulged with the enjoyment of theſe important advantages; ſurely ſuch a one may acquit providence, and allow that it has dealt nobly with him. Still however ſome reverſe of fortune, ſomething from which a ſenſative nature ſhrinks, muſt remain to be felt and endured. Death, however terrible, muſt be encountered; though it ſhould be born with greater patience, as it is nothing preternatural, nor the peculiar deſtiny of any one individual, but common to the whole ſpecies: nay, inſtead of being only tolerable, we ought to eſteem it highly acceptable, even on this account, that it reſcues us from the numberleſs ſeductions and errors to

which we are liable, ſo long as we live in this world; where the inconceivable diverſity and inconſiſtency of prevailing opinions ſuſpend our moſt indefatigable inquiries, and diſtract us in the purſuit of truth, to the perception and enjoyment of which this unwelcome meſſenger gently leads us.

Now, that no acquiſition more bliſsful can accrue to the ſoul of man, I apprehend we may eaſily judge, from that boundleſs and inſatiable deſire of knowledge which is originally implanted in our frame, and which cannot be extinguiſhed but by its diſſolution; nor can I perceive its perfection to conſiſt in any thing elſe, than the full and perfect attainment and poſſeſſion of truth. Now, what can we call the moſt ſtrenuous efforts of our profoundeſt and moſt extenſive knowledge, but nearer and more ſucceſsful approaches to truth? From whence it is plain, that, when the one is attained, the other can only be perfect: and it may with certainty be pronounced, that he who diſtinctly beholds, who intuitively perceives, the lovely form of truth, has attained the greateſt good towards which his wiſhes aſpired; nay, that he is really and completely bleſſed.

But if we are impelled by the whole force of nature to purſue our greateſt happineſs, and

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fly from every oppreſſive weight of miſery; what can we imagine more abſurd and irrational, than a man who is ſo violently afflicted for the death of others, as to forget that felicity towards which he is natively impelled, and to purſue a life of conſummate and unmixed deſpair? For ſuch is the unalterable ſtate of things, that unleſs one be abſolutely enfranchiſed from the terrors of death; though he ſhould not only have acquired the theory of virtue, but even in many caſes reduced it to practice, and confirmed it by habit; though he ſhould be ſufficiently diſintereſted, to deſpiſe every ſelfiſh purſuit, in compariſon of its poſſeſſion; ſtill it it is impoſſible for him to be happy. For what is the conſummation of miſery, but torture intenſely affecting, and perpetually reſiding in the ſoul? What elſe is terror, but a conſtant and painful impreſſion, that we are threatened with ſuch evils as are hateful and diſagreeable to nature? But how can he be either eaſy or happy, who is inceſſantly haunted and depreſſed with theſe tormenting anticipations? Nay this muſt likewiſe be placed to the account of his unhappineſs, that he has not only treaſured up an internal fund of plagues and miſeries in his own boſom, but likewiſe becomes the proverb, the reproach, and deriſion of others; becauſe

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no uneaſineſs appears more ſordid and deſpicable, as nothing leſs becomes a man than its exceſs.

Now if theſe corporeal infirmities, whoſe infection reaches the ſoul, be juſtly puniſhed with keen and bitter reproach, ſhall thoſe vices which are produced and entertained by the mind itſelf be branded with no mark of infamy? It is, on the contrary, certain, that theſe ought to be chaſtiſed with ſeverer and more vindictive animadverſion, as the ſoul which they engroſs and occupy is a nobler habitation than the body.

But if any paſſion indulged in its extreme implies a high degree of turpitude, and juſtly ſubjects its victim to the keeneſt reproaches, ſurely it muſt follow, that he who abandons himſelf to exceſſive grief, can neither merit nor expect the leaſt approbation. For as, in our opinions, there is a particular ſeries or concatenation which is moſt agreeable to truth; ſo, in the courſe of things, there is a chain or ſucceſſion of connected events, reſulting from the eſtabliſhed laws of nature and providence: and as, in the courſe of diſputation, we are neceſſarily led from one concluſion to another, in the ſame manner, he who permits his internal œconomy to be ſtained or diſarranged, he

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who ſuffers himſelf to be entangled in the intricacies of vice and exorbitant paſſion, ſhall immediately be hemmed in and overwhelmed by increaſing miſeries, ſhall be covered with numberleſs deformities and turpitudes.

YET though I have declared ſo violently againſt exceſſive grief, let me not be thought entirely to diſapprove it in all its degrees, nor to wiſh it abſolutely eradicated from the mind. There are undoubtedly certain boundaries, within which nature impells, and reaſon permits us to grieve; for, as it is wiſely remarked by Crantor, when any part is ſeparated from the body by violence or amputation, it is natural and proper that ſenſibility ſhould remain, becauſe thus we are not only rendered conſcious of the diſorder, but urged and ſtimulated to apply its remedy. For as no perſon can be inſenſible to corporeal pain, without being of a ſavage and ſtubborn nature; ſo the ſame inſenſibility transferred to the mind, indicates a ſtupid and inflexible diſpoſition. But this is the culpable conduct, this the fault which I reprehend, when we ſo abſolutely reſign ourſelves to uncontroulable ſorrow, as to deſerve a keener and more intolerable rebuke, for adopting an extreme diametrically oppoſite to that natural apathy which I formerly mentioned.

tioned. For as he who is impenetrably ſtupid, and deprived of all ſenſibility, appears a monſtrous phenomenon, ſomething quite different from human nature, which, when ſeized with a mortal diſtemper, ſhows, by its intrinſic motions, ſome degree of pain and uneaſineſs; ſo he who entertains immoderate grief, may be juſtly thought forgetful of his nature and its ſituation, as he ſeems to revolt againſt the neceſſary conditions of his being, the wiſe and good order eſtabliſhed by nature and providence. From which it evidently appears, that men are highly criminal, when they dare to decline theſe revolutions of deſtiny that are common to their whole ſpecies, or when they do not ſufficiently diſcover what becomes them in life, and diſtinguiſh what things are purſuable, from what are avoidable in their own nature, which is the proper office of wiſdom.

Now that wiſdom is deputed by the ſanction and authority of Heaven, to be the ultimate arbitreſs of human affairs, from whoſe deciſions there is no appeal, cannot ſurely be denied by any one. But he who gives way to the violence of unnatural grief, plainly oppoſes this ſacred regent in her province, and is guilty of the moſt inexpiable treaſon; for he not only reſigns himſelf to melancholy and tears, with-

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out the leaſt proſpect of any ſalutary conſequence, but entirely loſes the uſe of all his deſigning faculties. Where then is reaſon, if it ſuffers itſelf to be extinguiſhed in grief? Where is the perſeverance and conſtancy of his virtue, if he is at variance with himſelf, and lies ſubdued by diſtreſs? Where, in ſhort, is his participation of human nature, ſince he forgets that he is a man, and thinks himſelf above the reach of death?

It is however egregiouſly abſurd for any one to flatter himſelf, that he is not ſubjected to the ſame deſtiny which all the reſt of his kind ſuſtain with reſignation. For is it poſſible that any one ſhould be ignorant, what a ſtrict relation, what an accurate ſimilarity ſubſiſts between man and man? Were not men participants of the ſame nature, were they not endued with qualifications in common, were they not endeared by common tenderneſs ariſing from that participation, what reaſon could be aſſigned for mutual beneficence? what ſhould oblige one to aſſiſt another, either with his advice, his fortune, or his influence, or to defend him from the attacks and hoſtilities of his enemies? Yet we find, on the contrary, that they who diſcover an averſion to ſuch kind interpoſitions, are not only diſapproved by the

common ſuffrage of their brethren, but even accuſed of ſelfiſhneſs and cruelty. For ſurely we are not like our ſtatues, hewn into form from a rock of cold marble, or a maſs of unfeeling oak. There are within us certain propenſities to compaſſion and natural affection, which will never ſuffer to be extinguiſhed a diſpoſition that aſſimilates our nature to the Deity; I mean, the univerſal tenderneſs by which we exert ourſelves for the aſſiſtance and happineſs of others. Neither is it at all poſſible to doubt, that there is a principle deeply and indelibly impreſſed on the human heart, even in the formation of our exiſtence; by which, as often as we perceive any perſon involved or oppreſſed with misfortunes, we are touched with ſympathy even to the inmoſt receſſes of our ſouls; nor can we, without ſelf-diſapprobation, omit any opportunity of alleviating his diſtreſs, if our interpoſitions may prove effectual, though before that inſtant he had been an entire ſtranger to us. For nature, by ſilent, yet powerful and intelligible importunities, ſeems to ſolicit from us the ſame exertions of benignity and tenderneſs towards the diſtreſſed, which, in ſimilar circumſtances, we would wiſh or expect from them.

If then there be particular occurrences which every one has reaſon to preſage as certain and unavoidable, why ſhould he be diſturbed and agitated in ſuch a violent manner when they really happen? Why ſhould he not rather recogniſe theſe events as the inevitable deſtiny of our nature, and equally impending on all the ſpecies? How much more beautiful is the ſentiment of that dramatic character introduced by Terence, who acknowledges himſelf a man, and thinks himſelf concerned in every event relative to his nature?

When therefore, with the ſame ſpirit and vigour as we would expell a beaſt of prey ſtung with thirſt of blood, we have eraſed and obliterated this malignant prejudice out of our minds, that *wretchedneſs* and *humanity* are ſynonimous terms; when we have found the deſtiny of our nature is not wholly evil, but kindly tempered with bleſſings and ſatisfactions; we ſhall certainly paſs our days in much leſs miſery and ſolicitude. For this conſolatory impreſſion, this laſt reſource will ever be left us, that whatever happens ought to be born with a firm and unſhaken mind, and nothing can poſſibly befall a man which will render him totally and finally miſerable. This tranquillity we may quickly poſſeſs, if we do

not meanly flatter our falſe and miſchievous prepoſſeſſions, but embrace the truth with all our ſouls, which is the nobleſt, the moſt divine of all acquiſitions. Under her ſacred auſpices we ſhall proceed with rapidity and ſucceſs in the cultivation of our being; we ſhall acquire that magnanimity and ſublimity of ſpirit, which alone can render us equal to every adverſity; we ſhall enter the liſts of virtue and honour, to perform the nobleſt and moſt arduous taſks which they demand with redoubled alacrity and vigour, when we eſteem nothing truly laudable, but ſuch diſpoſitions and actions as are prompted by eternal rectitude and juſtice, nor ſolicit any other advantages, but that real and ſubſtantial excellence which alone can be productive of true glory.

But here I ſeem to confine myſelf within limits which are too narrow and contracted. For how can a more extenſive champaign be opened? a champaign in which my thoughts may rove more at large, and derive more ſolid advantage from their excurſions, than that which now lies before me. But I ſhould bluſh, and appear unpardonable even to myſelf, if, neglecting that medicine for a wounded ſoul, which of all others appears to be moſt ſalutary and effectual, I ſhould turn the whole force of my

my expoſtulation, the whole current of my thoughts, to my own pleaſure and ſatisfaction alone.

I HAVE already ſaid, that we ought ſtrenuouſly to avoid intenſe and permanent ſorrow; nor was my aſſertion without reaſon, ſince immoderate grief is frequently a copious and genuine ſource of numerous and ſevere afflictions, and attended with no beneficial effects that can balance them.

NOR is exceſſive grief an ambiguous or equivocal conduct, which we may be induced either to praiſe or blame, by numerous and important motives of equal force, derived from different opinions and oppoſite methods of reaſoning. For if I ſhould be threatened with a dilemma even of this kind, I would act with uncommon diffidence and precaution, nor ſuffer myſelf to be involved in a ſituation from whence I could perceive no egreſs. But ſince this is the caſe, that intenſe regret is really culpable, I aſſert, that we ought to ſubdue our paſſions, and reſiſt grief with invincible ſpirit; for whether we explore our own minds, or conſult the common ſentiments of mankind, this is certainly our proper courſe. But if we tranſfer our thoughts to the dead themſelves, how can we imagine that our inexhauſted tears

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and endleſs lamentations will be acceptable to them, eſpecially as they can derive no advantage from it? but to ourſelves it will be fruitful of many diſadvantages, and many ſevere reflexions from thoſe who obſerve us. What therefore can we imagine they would wiſh or ſolicit from us? nothing certainly, but that we ſhould conſecrate them to memory with diſtinction and veneration.

LET none, ſays Ennius,

Let none who to the pile my relicts bear,
Beſtow the idle tribute of a tear.

For what reaſon? He himſelf aſſigns it:

Embalm'd in fame my aſhes ſtill ſhall lie;
Nor ſhall my nobler ſelf, my numbers, die,
But, breath'd from mouth to mouth, in endleſs ſeries fly.

Why therefore ſhould he refuſe the tribute of lamentations and tears? Becauſe he could only wiſh for that glory, which, whilſt alive, he was conſcious of having obtained. On the ſame account then we have reaſon to ſuſpect, that our protracted and deep regret may prove uneaſy and diſagreeable to the dead, ſince we cannot imagine that they would importune any favours from us, unleſs they were ſuch as afford ourſelves the greateſt pleaſure and ſatisfaction. This muſt certainly be glory, or a conſtant and faithful

faithful recollection of their virtues, with all the love and admiration which they merit; which if we can immortalize, by tranſmitting them, in converſation or writing, from generation to generation, this ſeems to be the only obligation, nor is it a trivial one, which we can confer upon the dead.

WHAT ſhall we ſay to the maxim delivered by men of eminent wiſdom, That he who grieves beyond the power of conſolation or recovery, cannot adore the Deity himſelf with that fear and reverence which is due to ſupreme majeſty? For it is the higheſt impiety, the moſt execrable ſacrilege, to affront, with ungrateful returns, that free and diſintereſted goodneſs from whence, as from its native ſource, flows every advantage that we can enjoy. On the contrary, they who have implicitly obeyed the will of Heaven, and have received all the diſpenſations of its wiſe and free adminiſtration with equal complacency, are honoured with the higheſt praiſes of their cotemporaries whilſt living, and conſigned to immortality, with imperiſhable honour, when dead: This is the common ſenſe of mankind from the earlieſt antiquity.

BUT if any characters were found who, to the worſhip of the Gods, joined the practice of virtue,

virtue, and the exerciſe of univerſal benevolence, upon ſuch theſe honours have always been conferred with proportionable zeal and alacrity.

We have cauſe therefore in this, as in almoſt every other ſtep of its procedure, to venerate the excellence of ancient wiſdom. For what idea can we entertain as the aggregate of human perfection, what character under heaven can we dignify with more ſincere or exalted praiſe, than him whoſe life has been one uninterrupted ſeries of progreſſive virtue; who, to the worſhip and veneration of the Deity, has added the conſtant obſervation of univerſal philanthropy and juſtice; nor ever indulged the faineſt wiſh, the moſt trivial thought, which had no tendency to improve his piety, humanity, or virtue?

In vain would we attempt to aſſign any other cauſe for that ignorance and error which violate the tranquillity, and obſcure the dignity of human nature, than the perpetual negligence, which almoſt univerſally prevails, of piety towards God, of beneficence and charity towards men, and of virtue and rectitude in our own diſpoſitions and actions, though theſe ought to be the chief ends, the prepollent principles of human conduct. From the ſame unhappy cauſes, we moſt ardently purſue what we

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ought moſt ſtrenuouſly to avoid, and are hurried along, with a blind precipitation, to ſuch actions as deform the ſcene of human nature with ſavageneſs and ferocity. From this envenomed ſource natively ſpring thoſe fierce and unquenchable deſires, by which not only particular men, but even whole families and mighty ſtates have been finally extirpated. Beſides, from hence we may trace the blackeſt treachery, the moſt implacable diſcord, the fierceſt and moſt uncontroulable ſeditions, the extermination of men, and devaſtation of realms. Hence likewiſe theſe inſupportable calamities, theſe furious commotions, which muſt not only blaſt the order, but deſtroy the enjoyment, and extinguiſh the very deſire of life in deſpair and bitterneſs.

QUITE different is the fate of thoſe, whoſe hearts are proof to temptation, and whoſe ſouls are enamoured of virtue; for, invariably obſequious to the divine will, they never hope that its procedure ſhould comply with their humours and miſtakes, but implicitly, and without reſerve, abandon themſelves, and their deareſt intereſts, to its direction. Violence and injury are foreign to their nature; their benevolence, their tenderneſs, their liberality are extenſive as God's creation. No longer are they

acceſſible to the attacks of exquiſite pain, no longer domineered by the rage of blind and impetuous deſire; vice has rallied all her forces againſt them in vain, they have repelled her utmoſt efforts, they have expunged and eradicated the very ſeeds and principles of irregular paſſion out of their ſouls.

SURELY therefore our anceſtors acted with the utmoſt propriety, when they dignified with divine honours thoſe whoſe lives were agreeable to themſelves, dear to God, and advantageous to man. Nor is the heavenly ſtrain of the wiſe poet without foundation, which informs, that they paſs an endleſs duration in happy and immediate intercourſe with the immortal Gods.

YET this will not lead us ſo far as to imagine, what neither reaſon can conceive nor digeſt, that their bodies ſhall be tranſlated to Heaven. For nature, which faithfully reſtores every detached particle to its proper and peculiar element, will not ſuffer us to believe, that what is earthly can be any where lodged but on earth. The ſame inconſiſtency, however, is implied, in thinking that the ſouls of thoſe who are diſtinguiſhed in Heaven and earth, by their piety towards the one, and their beneficence to the other, ſhould be elevated to thoſe ſuperior regions

regions, as a ſphere more adapted to their merit. Such, if we may believe the traditionary accounts continued even to our times, ſuch was the glorious fate of Romulus, the original founder of our city, whom the diſtinguiſhed benefit he conferred upon mankind, in erecting a ſtate ſo majeſtic, juſtly advanced to the dignity of the Gods. And this happened in an enlightened period, when the human powers, cultivated with letters, experience, and diſcipline, could eaſily diſcern things from appearances, and truth from falſehood; ſo that their minds cannot be thought ſuſceptible of any perſuaſion, which implied the leaſt ſemblance of fiction or impoſition. It is therefore concluſive, that this being, though once clothed in mortality, yet diſcovered ſuch pre-eminence in virtue, and in every beneficent quality which adorns our nature, that he was not only judged worthy of immortality, but deified. Such grace and favour has alſo been beſtowed on others, (if the annals of our fathers deſerve our confidence), that their departure from life was immediately ſucceeded by their acceſſion to divinity.

THIS opinion was firſt received among the Greeks, and perhaps from them adopted amongſt us. For Hercules, Bacchus, the renowned brothers Caſtor and Pollux, with many

illuſtrious women, were mortals themſelves, and deſcended from mortal progenitors, who are now ſuppoſed to be inveſted with no mean rank among the Gods. But becauſe they excelled in virtue, and ſtrenuouſly endeavoured to rouſe the emulation of others, by exhibiting illuſtrious examples of unbiaſſed rectitude and diffuſive beneficence; for this reaſon fame, inſpired with gratitude by the recollection of their noble and meritorious actions, exalted them to Gods.

Nor will it be hard to prove, that theſe whom we call the *Dii majorum gentium*, or Gods of ſuperior dignity, as well as a great many others who are now numbered with the Deities, were once inhabitants of earth, and from thence tranſlated to heaven. The moſt convincing argument for this is, that we admit as ſacredly true the qualifications aſcribed to theſe great perſons, upon which their deification is founded; that a principle, ſupported by the unanimous conſent of ſo many wiſe men in ſo many different ages, ſeems to have the ſanction of truth itſelf, if the uniform dictates of reaſon can be called *the voice of truth*; and that it will not be eaſy to find in the univerſe another ſtation, where virtues ſo refined, extenſive, and pure, can be agreeably placed, and operate with propriety.

propriety. For if we reaſon at all, will we not diſcover the greateſt infatuation by concluding, that thoſe who have approached the Gods, and emulated their excellency by their innocence, their liberality, and every virtue which conſtitutes a great and good character, ſhould be diſjoined in place and rank from thoſe to whom they are allied by nature and diſpoſition? And as the ſoul of man, deſpiſing all ſublunary enjoyments and poſſeſſions, aſpires with innate propenſity to heaven, is it agreeable to the wiſdom or equity of the divine procedure, that theſe, who by the ſecret impulſes of nature, as well as by their own endeavours and inclinations, have in reality cultivated the divine image in their boſoms, and formed themſelves as much according to it as poſſible, ſhould be deprived of that celeſtial inheritance which is moſt agreeable to their characters, and moſt adequate to their merit? Nay, to me they appear with ſo much greater juſtice to be numbered amongſt the inhabitants of heaven, as their virtue and liberality ſhone with brighter and more diſtinguiſhed radiance upon earth. For who could be more eminent for his intrepidity than Hercules? who could diſcover more conſummate wiſdom? who could ſhow himſelf more effectually ſuperior to every inordinate paſſion?

paſſion? What arduous atchievements did he not undertake and accompliſh, that he might exert the native grandeur of his ſoul, and be advantageous to mankind? or what cup of pain and adverſity did he not drain, even to its bitterest dregs? Can we therefore bear to think, that ſo noble a being ſhould be excluded from heaven, on whoſe triumphant virtue eternal glory and renown beſtow, with pleaſure, their moſt diſtinguiſhed garlands? Such likewiſe muſt be the ſituation of all the other heroes, who, though each of them excelled in a different province, were every one eminent for performing the part aſſigned them with approbation and ſucceſs, whether in diſcharging thoſe duties which we owe to Heaven or to mankind.

It cannot therefore be thought, that ſtatues which, however durable, are obnoxious to the injuries of time, nor even the fading wreaths of a momentary triumph, are adequate returns for ſuch ſublime exertions of virtue: but honours of a more permanent and incorruptible nature were explored to inveſt thoſe, who nobly preferred virtue, honour, and glory, to the undiſturbed enjoyment of eaſe, to the higheſt gratifications of irregular paſſion, to the moſt exquiſite ſenſible pleaſure, and even to life itſelf.

If then, with all our ſouls, we approve and admire the charms of pure and diſintereſted virtue; in the ſame degree muſt we admire and approve the juſt and equitable diſtribution of things, which allots different habitations for thoſe who have cultivated and improved their being with every uſeful or amiable quality, and for thoſe whoſe lives are branded with vice or enormity, ſuitable to the characters of each. For it was a fixed principle amongſt the wiſeſt of our predeceſſors, a number of whom had enriched their minds with traditions and obſervations collected from antiquity, that as the Gods are highly enamoured of juſtice, as they diſcover it to be a leading principle in their adminiſtration, it was incompatible with the divine character not to entertain and manifeſt the higheſt averſion to impiety and wickedneſs; from whence it is evident, that, by their own wiſe inſtitutions, ſuch perſons as, during their whole lives, have abandoned themſelves to impious and cruel indulgences, ſhould be removed as far as poſſible from the pure and happy ſociety above.

This not only conſiſts with reaſon, to be cordially received and publicly declared as an article of faith, but will alſo be productive of the greateſt and moſt extenſive utility. For if,

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in the ſoul of man, there remains the faintest ſpark of piety, if he is in any degree ſenſible to the influence of religion, ſurely this muſt prove a powerful and inſuperable reſtraint to check him in the perpetration of vice and wickedneſs, when he believes and reflects, that ſuch as have ſtained their ſouls with impiety and pollution ſhall be eternally excluded from all communication and intercourſe with the Gods. Nor did the ſame ſages think heaven equally acceſſible to all: For they have taught us, that thoſe who have inquinated their ſouls with crimes and atrocities, ſhall never emerge from their ſtate of guilt and pollution, but ſink deeper in darkneſs and turpitude to all eternity; whereas ſouls who have preſerved their original purity, ſimplicity, and integrity, who are uninfected with the corruptions of the world, who have poliſhed and refined their original powers with the moſt exquiſite and nobleſt arts, ſhall, by a gentle and eaſy tranſition, return to the Gods, that is, to natures like their own.

If theſe important doctrines are true, it is ſurely incumbent on us, by exerting all the powers of our ſouls, by exerciſing the moſt indefatigable diligence, to endeavour that we may not be excluded from heaven, but obtain a place among thoſe happy beings, whoſe peculiar

culiar prerogative it is to poſſeſs and enjoy eternity. Which whoever would wiſh to accompliſh, (and it is what all who value themſelves, or who could live agreeably to nature, ſhould wiſh to accompliſh), let them never be ſo far induced by infatuation, as to adopt thoſe very purſuits which lead others to ineffable and ultimate perdition. For it can never enter into our expectation, that our actions may elude the divine obſervation; becauſe from an omnipreſent Nature, whoſe conſciouſneſs is equally extenſive with his exiſtence, nothing can be latent, nothing concealed; nor will an infinitely pure intelligence approve ſuch a conduct, as not only ſuperior beings, but men who duly poſſeſs and exerciſe their faculties, muſt ſurvey with horror and deteſtation. For what is more ſordid and contemptible than ſenſative appetite inordinately gratified? what more baſe and infamous than avarice? what more hateful and execrable to God and man than cruelty? For theſe vices, though they are ſometimes the curſe and reproach of particular characters, are no leſs incompatible with our nature when uncorrupted, than it is agreeable to our conſtitution to purſue every legitimate advantage or gratification, to which we are however impelled by all the propenſities of our being; and

within theſe bounds we muſt confine ſuch violent deſires as too frequently attract us towards thoſe objects which are hoſtile to our virtue. This he may with much greater eaſe accompliſh, who, whilſt he traverſes the path of life, retains perpetually in view the glorious end of his career; and ſo delightful, ſo exhilarating is this reflection, that, by reconciling us to the performance of our duty, and rendering us chearful in its diſcharge, we are inſpired with an intenſe pleaſure, a rational enthuſiaſm, which removes and annihilates all ſenſe of fatigue.

THIS inceſſant and unwearied activity is eaſily diſcerned in ſuch men as are diſtinguiſhed for their excellence, or animated with the love of juſt and well-earned praiſe; who, in the moſt arduous enterpriſes of war, in the keeneſt litigations of property between individuals, in the warmeſt contentions that ariſe concerning the proper adminiſtration of the commonwealth, have habitually exerted ſuch vigour of ſpirit, ſuch dauntleſs intrepidity, that they were either entirely inſenſible or abſolutely careleſs of all the toils they ſuſtained, or the dangers with which they were threatened. For the proſpect of future advantage or praiſe irreſiſtably ſtimulates, and ſtrongly invigorates the

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ſoul, when nobly ſtruggling with its utmoſt efforts in the cauſe of virtue, or ſtraining and panting in the purſuit of true glory.

Nor are theſe happy effects only perceived in arduous and painful undertakings, but even in ſuch labours and deſigns as are of eaſier execution. For if you obſerve thoſe who are candidates for fame in ſports and exerciſes, when fired with the ardour of hunting, or emulation in the race; though ſpent and exhauſted almoſt to utter extinction with the length and rapidity of their courſe, yet never will ye find their ſpirit abated, nor their enthuſiaſm cooled. Even in our own ſtate, when animated with deſires and expectations of public honour, what immenſe labours, what inſuperable difficulties, what important ſolicitudes have not our patriots ſuſtained and conquered? yet how few, how very few can be found, who, forgetting the pleaſure of the purſuit, will venture to acknowledge, that the labour attending public negotiations, or the toil and anxiety ſuſtained by candidates for political offices, have debilitated their powers, or reduced them to a ſtate of laſſitude and inaction?

In the ſame manner, they whoſe ſouls are prepoſſeſſed, whoſe eyes are captivated with the majeſtic charms, the ſacred effulgence of

virtue, or they who feel the irreſiſtleſs attractions of glory, either experience their vigour increaſing with their toils; or if their taſk ſhould demand ſuch violent and continued exertions as entirely ſubdue them, and render intervals of relaxation neceſſary, yet they preſently return to buſineſs, renovated in all their powers, and inſpired with freſh alacrity; for the advantage of their country, the acquiſition of a deathleſs and unſpotted fame, actuate all their faculties, and engage all their attention.

BUT though any ſhould think it beneath the dignity of virtue to purſue immortal fame as a motive of action, and place human happineſs in the conſciouſneſs of rectitude alone; yet the ſame principle will not lead them to deſpiſe thoſe divine honours which great and good men, after their deceaſe, have been generally thought to participate: for ſuch ſentiments and diſpoſitions would ſeem to reflect diſhonour upon the Gods themſelves, who demand the ſame teſtimony of regard and veneration from their inferiors.

So eminent however is the wiſdom of thoſe who have been actuated by theſe exalted motives and delightful expectations, that, whatever hopes they cheriſh, whatever actions they perform, muſt be the mature and certain re-

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ſult of reaſon. Amongſt theſe we may enumerate the Lacedemonians, a nation revered for the wiſdom of their laws, the ſeverity of their diſcipline, and the bravery of their conduct, whoſe invariable cuſtom it was, to dignify ſuch of their heroes as had loſt their lives in the cauſe of their country with divine honours. What then ſhall we ſay of Athens, the genuine parent of all wiſdom and learning? Did they not, by a vaſt majority of ſuffrages, inſcribe their Codrus amongſt the number of their Gods, as a reward of that filial reverence and affection which he diſcovered for his country, and all the other virtues in which he excelled?

Nor would I raſhly aſſert, that theſe learned men were wrong in their ſentiments, whoſe opinion it was, that the conſecration of great and good men with divine honours might prove a more powerful incentive to virtue, and more violently ſtimulate thoſe who are inſpired with love and tenderneſs for their country, to encounter the moſt formidable threats, the ſterneſt frowns of danger. For, except the conſciouſneſs of her own worth, glory is the only ſuitable and adequate reward of virtue. Nor is there any other ſpring of action, which can more effectually rouſe the powers of a noble mind to laudable and worthy enterpriſes; a principle

principle which was wiſely cultivated, and long retained by Greece, the faithful guardian, the tender and pious nurſe of univerſal literature. She, on account of their virtues, enumerates many of her ſons, who, from men, have been exalted to divinity. Among theſe there are ſome whoſe honours are ſtill recent. Others ſhe warmly contends have been raiſed to heaven many ages before, and aſſumed among the Deities. How great their number may be, thoſe who revolve her ancient records may perhaps diſcover.

Nor have I expatiated ſo diffuſely upon theſe deifications with a view to inſpire the leaſt ſuſpicion, that I thought them raſhly, inconſiderately, or too frequently conferred; ſince I myſelf venerate the perſons on whom they were beſtowed, and think them meritorious of the dignity which they enjoy. But rather, ſince we find ſo many amongſt all nations who have obtained immortal and divine honours, it was my intention to inflame the ſpirit, and excite the emulation of the good and virtuous, that they may ſtrenuouſly endeavour to deſerve and acquire thoſe teſtimonies of reverence, gratitude, and eſteem, which the wiſeſt of their ſpecies have judged to be moſt ſublime and permanent. For no higher glory, no greater fe-

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licity can adorn the human deſtiny, than elevation to that rank, towards which the founders of our city aſpired, by confronting every danger, ſuſtaining every fatigue, and encountering every conflict. And if private utility or advantage in any degree merit our regard, there is not a more certain method by which a man of wiſdom and letters can purſue theſe ends. For when temples are dedicated and conſecrated by public authority, what profound reverence do they obtain, and what tributes of praiſe accrue to their divinities from the people? ſince all who worſhip thoſe to whom the temples are devoted, muſt neceſſarily acknowledge, that once they were men, but are now, by their virtue alone, elevated to the ſtation, and inveſted with the power of Deity.

NOR is it ſurpriſing that thoſe Deities ſhould be publicly worſhipped, or that their fanes and temples ſhould be adorned with every ſignature of grandeur and ſanctity, whoſe paternal or maternal race are found to be divine. For as the worſhip which we pay them is ſacred and devote, as it reſults from thoſe original impreſſions of piety and equity which are implanted in the ſoul, ſo it ought neither to ſtrike us with aſtoniſhment nor heſitation. For nature herſelf inſtructs us, that, by a right derived from

from her own excellent conſtitution, thoſe who are deſcended of Gods muſt participate the ſame pre-eminence of exiſtence, the ſame ſublime qualities, with their parents. But that one who is produced by a mortal father, or born of a human mother, ſhould become a God, appears inconceivably aſtoniſhing, and proves a ſource of doubt and inquiry among many who contemplate the ſubject. Not that any one can queſtion, much leſs deny, the juſtice of a procedure ſo ſacredly equitable, as to reward the virtue of ſuch heroes, patriots, and legiſlators, with ſelect and uncommon honours; but that the force, the energy of virtue ſhould be ſo great, as, by her own operations only, to change the very nature of thoſe in whom ſhe inheres. This is a ſubject of diſpute even among thoſe who have drunk deeply from the ſprings of erudition. To whom it may be replied, That the eſſence, the perſonal identity of ſuch, are not changed by virtue; for this could not happen without the diſſolution of that which they formerly poſſeſſed: but the ſoul retaining the ſame nature, the ſame eſſential principles, aſcends to the Gods, and ſhares their prerogatives, as it is by its own indiviſible ſtructure immortal, and a participant of the divine eternity; whereas the body, by its primary

primary conſtruction, being mortal and diſcerptible, muſt remain upon earth; nor can any thing terreſtrial diveſt itſelf of its own conſtituent properties to aſſume others.

Now, though this inquiry appears involved in inextricable difficulties, and cannot admit of an eaſy ſolution; yet unleſs names and authorities be confronted with reaſon and argument, the explication already offered ſeems, in my opinion, not irreconcileable to common ſenſe. And becauſe, upon this topic, we have hinted, or at leaſt inclined to hint, every thing which is important, and worth obſervation, it appears indiſpenſibly requiſite that we ſhould mention what are the ſpecific virtues, and what their number, which, by being exerted in human nature, have advanced their votaries to the dignity of GODHEAD.

As this inſtitution was deduced from, ſo it is limited by public utility, that, with whatever marks of dignity men behold particular virtues impreſſed, they might hope to reach the ſame degree of elevation, if they excelled in the ſame accompliſhments which procured it.

IN this conduct, the force and efficacy of example is wonderful; for many, with chearfulneſs, imitate ſuch qualifications in others, as

have raiſed their poſſeſſors to thoſe advantages which they ardently deſire. And, from this early and uſeful principle of imitation, it frequently happens, that many exert indefatigable induſtry in ſuch acquiſitions and purſuits as never before entered into their imagination, till they were inſpired and preceded by illuſtrious examples; which, when it is more widely diffuſed, what rapid advances it makes, and what prodigious force it acquires, one may ſo eaſily obſerve, that it is unneceſſary for me to recapitulate them.

It is agreed by all the obſervers of human life, that the greateſt ſtates, the moſt ſplendid arts, and almoſt every thing elſe which attracts the wonder and attention of mankind, deduce their origin from obſcure and inconſiderable embrios. Theſe inſenſibly, by the progreſs of time, the aſſiſtance of contingencies, and the force of imitation, have ariſen to ſuch a height, that they are no longer capable of accumulation or increaſe. But if this progreſſive tendency of things to maturity and perfection gives us any pleaſure at all, I do not ſee how we can be more delighted with obſerving its gradations, than in tranſplanting and cultivating the virtues in our own boſoms, ſince upon theſe neceſſarily depend the formation of

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our character, and the regulation of our lives; which, when they proceed upon right principles, and are properly cultivated, will produce the moſt copious and delightful fruits of juſtice, integrity, and incorrupted praiſe.

But though we regard the virtues with ſacred veneration, both becauſe they are venerable in their own nature, and becauſe they ſo immenſely contribute to the exiſtence and happineſs of the human race; yet I ſhould be extremely glad to underſtand, for what reaſon almoſt every bird, fiſh, or reptile, ſhould be conſecrated and worſhipped by the Egyptians. We may excuſe the Syrians for their blind adoration of a fiſh, and for numbering it amongſt their Deities, as they are men neither endued with that penetration of genius, nor armed with thoſe ſovereign antidotes againſt ſuperſtition which philoſophy yields: But how the Egyptians, a nation admired and extolled for the extent and profundity of their knowledge and learning, ſhould degenerate into notions ſo abſurd and extravagant, I own myſelf at a loſs to know. For tell me, in the name of common ſenſe, ſhall we eſteem oxen, dogs, wolves, cats, and fiſhes amongſt our Deities? and ſhall the intellectual character of our na-

ture be ſo totally effaced, ſo dreadfully annihilated, that we muſt aſcribe the glory, the power, the munificence, the perfection of Godhead, to thoſe living and ſenſative beings, which are formed and propagated for our convenience and aſſiſtance as their ultimate end! creatures which Nature, attentive to her own works, muſt pronounce the moſt groveling, obſcene, and turpid phenomena that ſhe exhibits. Nay, ſhall we aſcribe divinity to thoſe vindictive animals, which depopulate the human race, and riot in carnage and deſolation! ſuch as crocodiles, aſps, ſerpents, and all the fierce and ſanguinary monſters of the deſert. How elſe can we more effectually invert the eſtabliſhed order of Nature, than by miſtaking her beſt and nobleſt, for her meaneſt and unworthieſt productions, and by placing that regard on the laſt which is due to the firſt alone. Nay, when we have diſplayed ſuch proofs of ſhameful ignorance and barbarity, is it not enough? Muſt we likewiſe defend with pertinacity that abſurd infatuation, which the very brutes whom we worſhip would bluſh to avow?

WITH the ſame inexplicable folly, Egypt enumerates amongſt its Gods, onions, garlic, and

and other productions of the earth. Such inſenſate opinions and practices one can ſcarce treat with decency, much leſs atttempt a formal refutation of them: for ſo incredible is their abſurdity, that there is no prejudice ſo obſtinate, no ignorance ſo invincible, as not to reject and deſpiſe them.

If ſtorms and tempeſts are deified in our country, this has been admitted, and ratified by hoary tradition, in the ancient rites and ceremonies of the Roman people; which can neither be altered nor diſturbed without the moſt impious ſacrilege, becauſe they are not only ſupported by arguments which are far from being contemptible, but their uſe and propriety is eſtabliſhed in practice and experience.

Greece however, which was formerly the object of our juſt praiſe, cannot be commended, in this place, for its unaccountable temerity and profaneneſs in deifying concupiſcence and veneral deſires, which may be diſcovered by the paintings and ſculptures ſo conſpicuous in their temples and academies. For what have amorous atchievements and inclinations to do in ſchools of diſcipline? or how could ſuch deifications contribute to the general utility or virtue of the ſtate, whether by becoming the objects of contempla-

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tion or imitation? When we either conſecrate heroes, or their virtues, with divine honours, our ſelection ought to be made with the moſt religious care, the moſt reverend diſcrimination; nothing precipitant, nothing inconſiderate ſhould be permitted; nothing which can even inſpire the ſlighteſt ſuſpicion of vice or folly muſt enter into the character of any being or quality which we call *divine*. Theſe important rules, theſe ſacred decorums, ſeem nevertheleſs to be violated by thoſe, who have dignified with divine power and authority, qualities directly contrary to probity and chaſtity.

SUCH therefore as have aſſiſted, improved, or embelliſhed human life in any conſiderable degree; ſuch as have diſtinguiſhed themſelves in the exerciſe of virtue, or in the accompliſhment of glorious and arduous enterpriſes; ſuch are, without doubt, entitled to that honour and worſhip which we pay to the Gods, by all the claims of juſtice, in the univerſal ſenſe of mankind. Nor would I, on any conditions, be the firſt to abrogate a cuſtom ſo laudable; as ſuch a precedent might be eſteemed, perhaps not without reaſon, impious and profane. For it is not my general maxim, ſo violently to adopt thoſe purſuits which are attended with renown

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and eclat, as to fly from thoſe which might impreſs my virtue or my reputation with the ſmalleſt ſtain. But as we ſee a number of characters both male and female inſerted amongſt the Gods, and as we venerate their moſt ſacred temples erected both in the city and in the country, we publicly teſtify our approbation of the wiſdom diſcovered in thoſe, by whoſe ſuperior powers, and ſalutary inventions, human life is now ſo happily cultivated and improved. For under the conduct and auſpices of ſuch excellent patterns, we cannot err; nor muſt we explore the reaſon of a conduct ſo juſt and proper in ourſelves, but in thoſe whoſe merits we revere, and whoſe examples we follow. It is the original and incorrupted voice of equity herſelf, that gives ſanction to thoſe who, far from depriving any man or woman diſtinguiſhed for their merit of that honour which is due to them, have preſerved their memory as ſacred and venerable; nor would it be juſt in us, if we are conſcious of any who have deſerved the ſame regard and reverence, if we ſhould ſuffer them to be abſorbed in ſilence and oblivion.

" Nor would I be thought to aſſert this on " thy account, my deareſt Tullia, alone, whoſe

" virtue

" virtue, wiſdom, modeſty, and learning, ſhall
" be inſcribed in living and indelible charac-
" ters on the vaſt expanſe of eternity, and
" brighten to its lateſt ages ; but on account
" of every other candidate for human appro-
" bation, whom I myſelf have obſerved, or
" who ſhall attract the attention of poſterity in
" any future period. For again my ſoul, again
" my obſervations turn upon thee. Thou, my
" ſweeteſt, lovelieſt treaſure, thou art not whol-
" ly loſt to my paternal tenderneſs, nor final-
" ly raviſhed from my fond embraces ; ſince,
" as days, hours, moments increaſe, thou art
" for ever more ſenſibly, more delightfully pre-
" ſent to my heart, in the riſing beauties of thy
" ſpotleſs fame, and in the heavenly ſplendour
" of thy virtue. Thou ſhalt live in the tender-
" neſs and regret of ages, whilſt virtue herſelf
" is memorable, and whilſt any of thoſe ſigna-
" tures remain uneffaced by which ſhe is con-
" ſecrated to fame. And that theſe ſhall be
" eternal, we may firmly truſt, becauſe they
" are in their own nature the beſt and moſt
" durable vehicles for conveying to remoteſt
" futurity a depoſite ſo ſacred. I ſhall there-
" fore never enjoy that conſcious approbation
" which ariſes from paying, in their full ex-

" tent,

" tent, the laſt duties to departed worth; un-
" leſs that filial reverence and affection ſo
" warmly, ſo faithfully, ſo effectually exerted
" in care and ſympathy for me; unleſs that ex-
" emplary virtue, which was one of the great-
" eſt ornaments of thy country, be duly ho-
" noured. And this end I ſhall eaſily obtain,
" ſince the place which the reaſon of things,
" and the ſenſe of mankind have taught me
" to ſelect for thy reception, can never
" ſtrike our ſenſes, nor enter into our ima-
" gination, without inſpiring the moſt ſub-
" lime, religious, and devote ſentiments. If
" then I can derive any conſolation from
" this ſource, and certainly much may be
" derived from it, or if any praiſe from
" having fulfilled the duties of a parent, theſe
" pleaſing retroſpects will for ever affect my
" heart with intenſe delight. For ſurely no
" ſounds can be more harmonious to my ear,
" no recollections more tranſporting to my
" ſoul, than thoſe which inform me, that,
" with tenderneſs, piety, and gratitude, I
" loved one whoſe intrinſic merit demanded
" theſe affections and ſentiments in their
" higheſt purity, and in their utmoſt
" warmth; particularly, as both our anceſ-

" tors, and thoſe of other countries, have
" been ſo profuſe and liberal in accumula-
" ting honours upon thoſe who deſerved
" ſuch important and ſolemn acknowledg-
" ments. But if there could be any reaſon
" for deifying even animals themſelves,
" which the Egyptians have frequently
" done, though no ſuch reaſon could ever
" be aſſigned; if the deſcendants of Cadmus,
" Amphitryon, or Tyndarus, have been ela-
" ted to the poſſeſſion and adminiſtration of
" heaven by the voice of fame; ſurely my
" deareſt Tullia may claim and obtain the
" ſame honour. This, with paternal zeal, let
" me attempt; let me, with the approbation
" of the immortal Gods themſelves, worſhip
" thee, already raiſed by native merit to
" their dignity, and mixing in their aſſem-
" blies; ſince the profound reverence and
" devotion with which I adore thee, cannot
" fail to obtain the ſanction of univerſal aſ-
" ſent and acclamation. And thou, no more
" my child, but a celeſtial being, ſhalt hear
" thy praiſes, and ſee thy worſhip, in that
" temple which is now ſolemnly dedicated
" and conſecrated to thy name. Nay, even
" amidſt the joys of heaven, it ſhall delight

" thy

" thy ſoul to perceive, that I have not only
" paid thoſe ſacred honours which I owe
" thee, but eluded the moſt dreadful blow of
" adverſe fortune, the crueleſt ſhaft which her
" malice could tinge to pierce the heart of
" an afflicted father. For well thou know-
" eſt, with what firm ſelf-poſſeſſion, what
" unſhaken vigour of mind, I formerly re-
" ſiſted every diſagreeable contingency; ſo
" that when fortune had expelled me from
" my country, and ſtripped me of all my dig-
" nities, ſhe could not, even by an attack ſo
" fierce and formidable, ſubdue or break
" my ſpirit. What ſevere and bitter con-
" flicts I maintained with my enemies, what
" vigour and reſolution I exerted in con-
" fronting their calumnies and diſconcert-
" ing their counſels, all who have obſerved
" with attention the various revolutions of
" our ſtate may ſufficiently know. But in
" that ſad, that tremendous moment, when
" fortune, my deareſt Tullia, as the laſt ef-
" fort of her rage, tore thee from my fond,
" my paternal arms, then indeed I felt, in e-
" very conſcious and ſenſative power, how
" extenſive is her influence in human affairs,
" and with what immenſe force, what mor-

" tal weapons ſhe armed herſelf againſt me.
" What therefore remained for wretched me,
" but to become a willing trophy, and yield
" her the full enjoyment of her victory,
" when, ſmarting with my recent, my ſoul-
" piercing wound, I was immerſed in grief,
" and all my powers ſubdued by inſupport-
" able diſtreſs? But now having armed and
" fortified my boſom againſt the utmoſt vio-
" lence of fortune by the dictates of philoſo-
" phy, now that I conſider thee as an im-
" mortal being; yet touched with ſoft com-
" paſſion for a weeping father, and beaming
" from thy throne in heaven the celeſtial ra-
" diance of thy ſmiles on my dejected mind,
" the largeſt capacities of my expanded ſoul
" can admit no more joy and ſatisfaction
" than at preſent I feel. All my being ſeems
" to exult in tranſports unfelt before; it riſes
" ſuperior to every threat or frown of for-
" tune, and celebrates its triumph over eve-
" ry adverſe accident of life. But ſince thou
" haſt already, in a manner ſo ſignal and effi-
" cacious, ſuſtained, enlightened, and ani-
" mated me by the force and luſtre of thy
" wiſdom and virtue, though now thou art
" raiſed above the intereſts and concerns of
" mortality,

" mortality, yet do not, Oh! do not finally
" forſake me! but ſometimes bend thy gra-
" cious eyes from heaven on a father, who
" ſtill recollects thee with all his original
" fondneſs. Be henceforth my genius, and
" lead me to that divine abode, where I ſhall
" for ever enjoy thy dear preſence, and paſs
" an eternity in that ſweet intercourſe which
" formerly gave me ſuch delight. Thus
" ſhalt thou make ample returns to my pa-
" ternal tenderneſs, a taſk which thou wilt
" ſurely perform with gratitude and joy;
" thus likewiſe ſhall I anticipate the happy
" moment of our reunion with more intenſe
" delight, than the grief and bitterneſs which
" I felt at our cruel ſeparation."

SERVIUS

SERVIUS SULPICIUS to M. T. CICERO, after the Death of his Daughter.

S. SULPICIUS ſalutes M. T. CICERO.

WHEN I heard the affecting news of your daughter Tullia's death, I felt all the ſentiments of tenderneſs and regret which I owed to friendſhip and humanity, and was equally touched as if I had participated with you the office and affections of a father. Had I been preſent with you, I ſhould not have been wanting in ſympathy; nor would this ſecondary manifeſtation of my grief have been neceſſary, ſince you muſt have perceived it more ſenſibly from your immediate obſervation of my whole demeanour. And though nothing can be more ſevere, nothing more oppreſſive to a ſenſible heart, than the taſk of adminiſtering conſolation in ſuch diſtreſſing circumſtances; becauſe thoſe by whom it ſhould be adminiſtered, being ſtrongly connected with the afflicted perſon, either

either by conſanguinity or affection, muſt not only feel the loſs which he laments as a misfortune to themſelves, but even ſuperadd his ſorrows to their own: nor can they, without floods of tears, ſuſpend the whole propenſity of nature, by an exertion ſo violent; inſomuch that they rather ſeem to want comfort from others, than to be in a ſituation for ſoothing a grief which they ſo intimately partake: yet I have determined, in as few words as poſſible, to write you ſuch thoughts as the preſent deplorable accident ſuggeſts; not becauſe I think you incapable of exploring the ſame alleviations from the exerciſe of your own mind; but becauſe, tormented and oppreſſed with recent anguiſh, its native activity and diſcernment may be too much clouded and reſtrained to call in ſuch reſources, or to feel them in a proper manner.

WHY ſhould your grief, though domeſtic, and peculiarly affecting, create ſuch violent emotions in your ſoul? Recollect how Fortune has uſed us, and how malignant her procedure ſtill continues to be. Alas! my friend, we have loſt every thing which is endeared to men, by ties equally ſtrong,

ſtrong, if not more ſacred than thoſe of nature; we are deprived of our country; we have ſeen a ſenſe of public virtue extinguiſhed; we are degraded from that dignity which was our native right; we have ſeen the commonwealth overturned, and all thoſe individual honours, which were the reſult of its former ſtructure, debaſed even to the duſt. When we contemplate this ſingle misfortune, what acceſſion can our anguiſh poſſibly receive? or what mind can be inured to ſuch painful recollections, without becoming inſenſible to every other diſaſter, and eſteeming every other misfortune inſignificant and trivial? Can I imagine that you lament her fate? How frequently and ſtrongly muſt the preſent poſture of affairs impreſs this thought on your mind, as well as on mine, that, in theſe tumultuous and diſagreeable times, ſuch perſons ought rather to be congratulated than bewailed, to whom Fate allows the happy alternative, of eluding thoſe internal pains which torment their ſurvivors, by exchanging death for life! At ſuch a period as this, what mighty attractions could life boaſt to detain her? Of what advantages could ſhe be ſecure? what

hope

hope could ſhe indulge? what conſolation could ſhe enjoy? Was it that ſhe might paſs her life in conjugal endearments with ſome ſelected youth of the firſt rank? As if it were likely, in theſe degenerate times, that you ſhould find ſuch a diſtinguiſhed youth for a ſon-in-law, to whoſe fidelity and tenderneſs you may think yourſelf ſafe in reſigning your daughter. Or perhaps you may ſuppoſe that ſhe might produce a numerous and blooming race, in whoſe advances to maturity, and proſpect of happineſs, ſhe would rejoice. But who, in theſe capricious revolutions of public affairs, can promiſe to retain the hereditary advantages which they derive from their parents? Who will ſtand a candidate for poſts of honour in the republic, according to their regular gradations? Who can exert his liberality in tranſacting the affairs of his friends? What privilege of this kind have we poſſeſſed, of which our deſcendents will not be deprived, before maturity of age ſhall qualify them to uſe it?

BUT perhaps it may be thought a misfortune prematurely to loſe our children; and a misfortune it is indeed, when it does not intercept the ſeverer and more diſagreeable

lot of enduring and ſuffering, in their full extent, thoſe miſeries and calamities which are the plagues of our times. I would willingly recapitulate the ſame circumſtances to you which have conſoled my own diſtreſs, if they could produce the ſame happy effect in your heart.

In my return from Aſia, whilſt from Ægina we ſailed towards Megara, I was intent on ſurveying the circumjacent regions. Behind me was Ægina, before Megara; on the right hand Piræeus, on the left Corinth. Theſe cities were formerly opulent and flouriſhing: now, ſunk in melancholy ruins, they lay in proſpect. Thus then I began to meditate with myſelf: "Strange! that we "ſhort-lived individuals of the human "ſpecies ſhould be ſo much moved when "any one of us leaves the preſent ſcene, "though, comparatively ſpeaking, we are "but the creatures of a day, whilſt, in the "horizon which at preſent bounds my view, "the ſad relics of ſo many mighty cities "lie ſcattered. If therefore thou, O Ser-"vius, art conſcious of being born to the "lot of humanity, why ſhouldſt thou not re-"ſtrain thy wiſhes and purſuits within the

"boundaries

" boundaries to which Fate confines them." Believe me, this contemplation did not a little contribute to fortify my mind. If you think it may probably have the ſame influence with you, place yourſelf in idea as much in the ſame ſcene, and let the ſame objects be as effectually preſent to your imagination as poſſible. At a juncture when ſo many great and good men have periſhed, marking the ſame period with calamity and ruin, when the luſtre of our ſtate is extinguiſhed, when all the provinces are in tumult and conflagration, why ſhould your ſoul be agitated with ſuch violent emotions for the loſs of one daughter, who is at beſt but a mortal and a woman; who, if ſhe already had not breathed her laſt, muſt, in the courſe of a few years, have ſuſtained that revolution, becauſe ſubjected by her nature and her birth to the inevitable laws of mortality?

But perhaps it may be proper to call your thoughts from ſuch melancholy views, and rather conſider what is worthy and becoming in the character which you bear, and in the part which Heaven has aſſigned you. Think that your daughter has lived

as long as life could be neceſſary or agreeable to her; that ſhe lived whilſt the ſtate flouriſhed in its integrity; that, with filial exultation, ſhe beheld her father a pretor, a conſul, an augur; that ſhe was nobly allied by marriage; that ſhe had performed almoſt all the duties, and ſhared almoſt all the enjoyments which occur in human life; and that ſhe expired with an expiring commonwealth. With what juſtice then can you or ſhe remonſtrate againſt fortune in theſe circumſtances? In ſhort, forget not that you are Cicero; forget not that you are the ſage whoſe wiſdom illumed, and whoſe counſels frequently directed others; nor imitate thoſe wretched empirics, who, oſtentatious of their ſkill in medicine, apply remedies to the diſeaſes of others at random, but ſhow their ignorance by their incapacity of curing themſelves: but rather employ ſuch preſcriptions as you have ſucceſsfully adminiſtered to others, for the reſtoration of your own mind, and the recovery of its original tranquillity. There is no ſorrow, however violent, which may not be ſoothed and diminiſhed by length of time; but it would be diſhonourable in you to wait for this period,

riod, without anticipating its effects by the ſalutary interpoſition of philoſophy. Nay, if the dead have any remaining conſciouſneſs, ſo intenſe, ſo delicate was your daughter's regard for you, ſo conſpicuous her piety towards all thoſe with whom ſhe was connected by nature or friendſhip, that certainly your protracted regret muſt be what ſhe would by no means wiſh. Offer then this grateful ſacrifice of your returning chearfulneſs to the ſoul of your departed child; allow this valuable conceſſion to your other friends and acquaintances, who feel, from ſympathy, all the anguiſh of a deploring father; grant it likewiſe to your unhappy country, that, if yet there is any reſource, ſhe may be directed by your wiſdom, or aſſiſted by your hand. In fine, ſince we have now ſunk to ſuch a depth of wretchedneſs, that we muſt groan beneath the weight of public ſlavery, be not ſo weak, ſo unmanly, as to inſpire obſerving eyes with dangerous ſuſpicions againſt you, and give them reaſon to think, that your tears rather flow for the ſubjection of the ſtate, and the conqueſts of her invaders, than for the fate of your daughter.

I AM aſhamed to expatiate more at large with you upon theſe topics, leſt you ſhould think me leſs confident in your prudence than it deſerves. For this reaſon, when I have mentioned only one thing more, I ſhall conclude my letter.

WE have frequently ſeen you, in proſperity and ſucceſs, behaving with the utmoſt decorum, and, for a conduct ſo ſingularly juſt and amiable, obtaining a high degree of public approbation. Let us therefore behold you ſupport an oppoſite character with equal grace and felicity; let us have the pleaſure of contemplating the ſame magnanimity exerted under the preſſure of adverſe fortune, and perceiving, by proof, that no calamity can depreſs your ſpirit more than it ought, leſt a character, which has already exhibited all the other virtues, ſhould appear defective in this alone.

As to myſelf, and the ſituation of my private affairs; when I hear that you have regained your former ſerenity, I ſhall inform you how things are diſpoſed here, and what is the ſtate of the province. Adieu.

A N-

ANSWER to the foregoing.

M. T. CICERO to SERVIUS SULPICIUS wiſhes happineſs.

HOW agreeable would it have been to me, my dear Servius, if, as you mention in your letter, you had indeed been with me, in this ſevere probation of my internal force? What effects your preſence muſt have had upon my heart, both by the conſolation that you would have offered, and the ſympathy that you would have diſcovered, almoſt equal to the cauſe by which it was exerted, I can eaſily perceive from this ſingle circumſtance, that, even whilſt I read your letter, it leſſened, in ſome degree, the ſenſe, the bitterneſs of my misfortune; becauſe, in writing, you have not only been extremely happy in chuſing thoſe ſubjects which are moſt effectually calculated to diminiſh my grief; but, in your efforts to impreſs theſe conſolations on my heart, you plainly

plainly ſhow, how deeply, how largely you have imbibed my diſtreſs. Yet your ſon Servius, by all the kind duties, the tender offices which, in ſuch a mournful criſis, could be exerted, gave the ſtrongeſt evidence how dearly he loved me, and how acceptable to you he thought ſuch teſtimonies of his affection towards me would prove. His friendſhip indeed, on other occaſions, when interpoſing for my happineſs or advantage, has often given me greater pleaſure, but could never affect me with livelier gratitude than at preſent. It is not however your words alone, nor your preſence and participation of my regret, which alleviates my anguiſh, but even the importance and dignity of the perſon by whom this friendly taſk is undertaken. For to me it appears ſhameful and unworthy, to bear my misfortune with leſs magnanimity, than one endued with your profound and comprehenſive wiſdom thinks I ought in propriety to exert. Yet in ſome intervals I am totally depreſſed, and almoſt incapable of reſiſting the violence of my emotions, when I reflect, that I am denied thoſe reſources of comfort, which others, whoſe examples I propoſed to my own conduct,

conduct, in the ſame unhappy circumſtances, enjoyed. For Q. Maximus, who was deprived of his ſon, after the youth had arrived at the conſular dignity, after he had, by important atchievements, exhibited diſtinguiſhed worth; and L. Paulus, who in ſeven days loſt two; and your Gallus, and M. Cato, the latter of whom was robbed of a ſon endued with the brighteſt genius, and the nobleſt virtues; lived in that happy age, when the dignities which they acquired in a flouriſhing commonwealth alleviated their calamities. But to me, from whom thoſe honours which you enumerate, and which I had acquired by the moſt arduous and difficult efforts, are extorted; to me that conſolation, which is now unhappily ſnatched away, was the ſole reſource. No longer were my thoughts engaged in tranſacting the buſineſs of my friends, nor in the adminiſtration of the ſtate; I could no longer with ſatisfaction plead in the Forum; it gave me intolerable pain to behold the ſenate-houſe; for I thought myſelf, as I really was, unjuſtly diveſted of all the advantages accruing from my fortune, and of all the happy fruits which might naturally be expected from my

induſtry. But whilſt I reflected that my ſituation was not peculiarly miſerable, and that the ſame public or private diſappointments, which affected me, were likewiſe participated by you and ſome others; whilſt I tried to ſubdue my own reluctant ſpirit, and to bear my bad fortune with that reſignation which it required, ſtill one dear, one laſt retreat was left me; ſtill there was one enjoyment in which my heart, excruciated with public cares and private diſappointments, could acquieſce; ſtill I had another ſelf, ſoftened by the charms, the graces, the delicacies of her ſex, whoſe converſation at once delighted and ſupported me, and in whoſe ſympathetic boſom I could freely effuſe all my diſtreſs, and all my anxieties. But now by this ſevere, this recent affliction, the former wounds of my ſoul, whoſe torture ſeemed a little mitigated, bleed and ſmart with renewed and aggravated anguiſh. For as then I found a refuge in paternal tenderneſs at home, from that exquiſite regret which the ruin of my country inſpired, alas! it is now no longer in my power to divert my attention from my deſolated houſe, that my thoughts may find repoſe in the public happineſs

pineſs and proſperity. Impelled therefore by my miſeries on all hands, I fly with equal ſpeed from family-endearments and public negotiations; becauſe neither can the ſweets of domeſtic life any longer ſooth the chagrin and diſappointment which reſult from my attention to the ſtate of my falling country, nor can the proſperity of my country leſſen the bitterneſs of my domeſtic diſtreſs. For which reaſon I expect you with greater impatience, and wiſh to ſee you as ſoon as poſſible: for no lenitive at preſent can be more effectual to me, than that reciprocation of kind offices, that amicable intercourſe of ſentiments and converſation, which ſubſiſt between us. As I expected your arrival, ſo it gave me pleaſure to hear you were approaching; and I wiſhed more anxiouſly for an interview ſo ſeaſonable, that we might concert between ourſelves how it would be proper to frame our deportment in this delicate conjuncture. There ſeems to be no alternative but implicit ſubmiſſion to the will of one perſon, whoſe private character we muſt acknowledge to be both wiſe and liberal; not hoſtile to me, and, if I can depend on my own judgment, very friendly

to you. Yet though this ſhould be the caſe, we may ſtill find it neceſſary to join our cloſeſt and moſt accurate deliberations, not upon what plan we ſhall act, but how we may enjoy, in a manner convenient for ourſelves, and becoming our dignity, that repoſe which his free and generous conceſſion may yield us. Adieu.

REVEALED RELIGION

PROPER CONSOLATION

OF

HUMAN LIFE.

By THOMAS BLACKLOCK, D. D.

Let not your heart be troubled : ye believe in God, believe alſo in me. JOHN xiv. 1.

To the REVEREND

Mr JOSEPH SPENCE,

Late PROFESSOR of POETRY in the Univerſity of OXFORD.

REVEREND SIR,

HOW agreeable to me is this public opportunity of expreſſing the ſentiments of a heart overflowing with gratitude for the many favours it has received from you. It is to your kind patronage that I owe my introduction into the republic of letters, and to your benevolence, in ſome meaſure, my preſent comfortable ſituation. But as this ſubject can no way intereſt the generality of readers, and would, I believe, hurt your delicacy, if I give ſcope to my pen; I will therefore leave unſaid the greateſt part of what the warmth of my ſenſibility ſuggeſts upon

upon this occaſion. Allow me only to add, that an Eſſay on the Evidence and Conſolation of Chriſtianity could not, with greater propriety, be dedicated to any one than the Reverend Mr SPENCE, who is ſo diſtinguiſhed for all the virtues that adorn the Chriſtian character. What is here preſented to you, was written with no intention of publication, but merely to amuſe myſelf at the time; but the advice of ſome friends, ſince my coming to Edinburgh, induced me to let it take its fate in the world with its Author: In this, however, my views were by no means lucrative. I am,

REVEREND SIR,

With the profoundeſt reſpect,

and warmeſt gratitude,

your moſt obedient,

humble ſervant,

THOMAS BLACKLOCK.

EDINBURGH,
Oct. 9. 1767.

REVEALED RELIGION

PROPER CONSOLATION

OF

HUMAN LIFE.

INTRODUCTION.

THE number and diverſity of evils to which man is obnoxious in his preſent ſtate, have long been the ſubject of conſtant experience and profound ſpeculation. Philoſophy has exhauſted her whole ſtrength in ſumming up all the ingredients which compoſe the bitter draught of life. The nature of each has been minutely examined, their quantity and duration accurately aſcertained. Much pains have been taken to diſtinguiſh real from imaginary evils. In

our calmer moments we can ſurvey, with ſome degree of ſerenity, the theory of human diſtreſs, and flatter ourſelves that the medicines preſcribed in every calamity may be extremely efficacious for our relief. But, alas! when miſery approaches, or even threatens to approach, we feel, to the depth of our ſouls, that pain, vexation, and grief, are real in themſelves, whatever cauſes produce them; that whether ſweetened or gilded, whether analized or compounded, ſtill the potion is no leſs bitter and intolerable than before. And whilſt the conſtitution and ſituation of human nature remain what they are, whilſt we continue capable of painful ſenſations, and ſurrounded with objects which ſenſibly irritate all our feeling powers, the united efforts of unaſſiſted reaſon will never be ſufficient to preſerve our hearts from trouble. Something indeed may depend on ſalutary precepts, and more ſtill on our habits of life; yet theſe, at beſt, can only leſſen the degree, not change the nature of misfortune.

WHY am I told that immunity from corporeal uneaſineſs is not a deſirable ſtate? "Be-

"cauſe,"

"cauſe," ſays the philoſopher, "it is not in "your power." And does this render it leſs deſirable? No, ſurely; but more ſo. Inſtead of being eaſy in the flame becauſe I cannot eſcape it, the very confinement aggravates the ſmart.

ACCORDING to others, we muſt purſue pleaſure as the ſovereign remedy. And what is pleaſure? Is it of the mind or body? If of the body, then the mutability of its affairs, and the frailty of its nature, will prove the inceſſant and incurable bane of happineſs; if of the mind, it muſt either ariſe from ſpeculation or benevolence. But how laborious our ſearch of truth, and how unſatisfactory our reward, has been the common topic of learned men, from the beginning of the world. Nor have the votaries of kind affection proved entirely ſucceſsful. The woes and crimes of men, their own limited powers, and their ineffectual ſchemes for public happineſs, render life ſufficiently laborious and painful. They ſit down indeed contented; but their reſignation is the effect of deſpair, rather than ſucceſs.

SUCH then were the proſpects, and ſuch the enterpriſes of men in their purſuit of happineſs, till the infinite goodneſs of their Creator interpoſed for their relief. At firſt, as their underſtanding was weak, he darted the beams of his returning grace and truth more faintly on the ſoul. By degrees the ſplendour brightened, till at laſt it appeared in meridian glory, by the incarnation of JESUS CHRIST. He it was who, about the time of his departure from this world, exhorted his apoſtles not to ſuffer their hearts to be troubled; for ſince they believed in the being of God, and all the truths deducible from that perſuaſion, they might alſo believe in him, and in all the conſolatory doctrines which he taught. It is as if he had ſaid, "Let not my approaching ſuffer-
"ings and death depreſs your minds with
"inſupportable grief; if you believe in God,
"it is natural to believe alſo that he will
"interpoſe for ſuffering goodneſs, to alle-
"viate its diſtreſs, and direct its conduct. Be-
"lieve therefore that I am the perſon ſent
"from heaven, to negotiate a full and cer-
"tain reconciliation between God and man.
"Believe the dignity of my character, the
"wiſdom

" wiſdom of my precepts, the truth of my
" doctrines, the reality of my miracles, the
" veracity of my promiſes, and the inten-
" tion of my arrival. Theſe truths, if conſtant-
" ly reviewed, and deeply impreſſed in your
" ſouls, will preſerve your hearts from be-
" ing troubled."

FIRST, then, we ſhall ſhow, That the belief of God's exiſtence and government is attended with as great difficulties as thoſe of the Chriſtian revelation.

SECONDLY, That the evidences which ſupport Chriſtianity are no leſs ſtrong, and ſtill more obvious.

THIRDLY, We ſhall compare the difficulties that occur in natural and revealed religion.

FOURTHLY, Prove that the conſolations derived from the former are more clearly diſcovered by the latter, with others which reaſon could never inveſtigate. And,

FIFTHLY,

FIFTHLY, Deduce a few plain and natural inferences from the whole.

SECTION I.

SINCE then ſomething at preſent exiſts, it is certain that ſomething muſt always have exiſted. For no eternal chain of cauſes and effects can ſupport themſelves, but muſt neceſſarily depend on ſome primary cauſe, which owes its being and energy to nothing elſe, but poſſeſſes the reaſon of its own exiſtence within itſelf from all eternity. There is no other rational account which we can give, why things began to be. And yet may we not appeal to the mind, whether it is not almoſt as difficult to conceive a thing begun without a cauſe, as an eternal and underived being?

AGAIN, from the diviſible and mutable nature of all material objects, it is plain that both their form and ſubſtance muſt depend on ſome immutable and imperiſhable cauſe; and yet we ſhall by no means find it eaſy to determine, whether the difficulty of ſuppoſing

poſing theſe elements exiſtent from eternity, is leſs than to ſuppoſe them created from nothing, or the product of a nature purely ſpiritual.

FURTHER, we cannot doubt but that motion is extrinſic to matter; and yet how that ſhould be impreſſed by a pure and uncompounded mind, which has neither ſolidity, extenſion, nor reſiſtance, muſt for ever remain a ſecret to us. That the motions of our bodies coincide with our own volitions, we know; but between the determination and the motion, we are ſenſible of no intermediate exertion by which that change is produced.

ONCE more, from the number and extent of God's works, his univerſal preſence muſt be granted; and yet how omnipreſence can be the attribute of any being which is not extended, how extenſion can ſubſiſt without diviſibility, or how any ſubſtance can be diviſible without being alſo mortal, we cannot eaſily comprehend.

FROM

FROM the changes which happen in nature, we ſeem to acquire a ſenſible demonſtration, that theſe are effected by ſome power; yet that energy operates ſo remotely from our inveſtigation, that in vain we trace effects to their original cauſe. The primary ſprings of action for ever elude our moſt diligent ſearch.

FROM the nice connexion and regular diſpoſition of things, and from the accurate fitneſs of means to ends, it appears that the Cauſe of nature muſt be an intentional and voluntary cauſe. And as he ſuperintends by the principles of wiſdom, ſo he acts for the order and happineſs of his creation; or, in other words, his principle of action is goodneſs. But how a being thus qualified and diſpoſed to govern his own works could permit the entrance and duration of evil, ſeems to be a queſtion of no eaſy ſolution. For what viciſſitude in nature could eſcape the foreſight of infinite wiſdom? what oppoſite force could check the operations of almighty power? what ſpecious appearance could deceive, or what irreſiſtible motive induce, infinite goodneſs to admit, and continue un-

der

der its government, actions and qualities diametrically oppoſite to its nature and ends? Nor is their number ſo few, nor their conſequences ſo light, as to be thought trivial, if the creation where they exiſt be of any importance.

FROM the pre-eminence and diſtinguiſhed perfections of human nature, it is juſtly ſaid to bear the immediate ſignature of divinity; nor is it too much arrogance to think man the lineal deſcendant of God's parental goodneſs, and the peculiar object of his care. But who will ſay that this amounts to demonſtration? or what uninſpired tongue will pretend to aſſure us, that we are not the product of ſome inferior agent? or that our being is not the reſult of general laws eſtabliſhed in nature, without any particular intention or exertion of providence?

FROM the natural tendency of virtue to happineſs, and of vice to miſery; and from the beneficent conſtitution of nature, enriched for our ſupply, and adorned for our delight; we may fairly conclude, that it was the plan of providence to exerciſe a mild do-

minion, and preſerve a favourable intercourſe with man, to hear the language of his wants and pains, to be pleaſed with his admiration and gratitude. Yet wars, inundations, earthquakes, or peſtilence, ſeem to ſet our nature in a leſs important light. The numerous triumphs of vice in its moſt ſiniſter views, the frequent defeats of virtue in its moſt public and diſintereſted ſchemes, ſeem to ſhake the connexion between heaven and earth, and inſpire fears, which no man can reſiſt, that human happineſs is no neceſſary end of the divine adminiſtration.

NOR is this all: If in any one part of God's univerſal dominion, or in any one period of his reign, the natural tendencies and viſible ſanctions of virtue and vice do not operate their full and complete effect, what concluſive arguments can we draw from the light of nature to prove, that in any other part, or in any other period, the diſtribution of good and evil ſhall be more juſt and equal? The philoſopher boldly anſwers, That this order ſhall take place in an immortal ſtate. But who told him this? If retributions are not equally adminiſtered here, whence can we infer

infer that they will ever be ſo? Who informed us that there is more juſtice or goodneſs in nature, than we actually ſee exerted? Is it from its effects that we conclude the exiſtence of a ſupreme Cauſe? How then can we attribute to that Cauſe, either perfections different in kind, or higher in degree, than ſuch as are actually conſpicuous in his works?

NEITHER are the natural arguments which ſupport the ſoul's immortality more concluſive. A ſelf-moving power may, for any thing we know, be as compatible with matter, as the ſuppoſition that it is influenced by an immaterial being: And though we perceive mind actually diſtinct from body, yet that perception is no demonſtration of its truth; nor can it ever prove, beyond all heſitation, that ſenſation is any more than external impulſe acting upon our nerves. Why then may not ideas be impreſſions of impreſſions? And as their relations or differences ariſe from their nature, and are conſequently parts of themſelves; what is reaſoning more than a regular ſeries of impreſſions? The ſame chain of argu-

ment will hold in thoſe ideas which intereſt the will. Pleaſing or painful impreſſions, produce pleaſing or painful ideas. Theſe are examined, balanced, and compounded, whilſt the mind is in heſitation, till ſhe at laſt repoſes in that which is moſt agreeable or leaſt uneaſy; and this acquieſcence is the determination of the will. Neither will the dictates of conſcience aſſiſt our philoſopher; for theſe are very different in degree, at different periods; and it is frequently difficult to diſtinguiſh the ſentiments of nature from thoſe of habit and prejudice.

THAT every impartial thinker will meet with theſe obſtacles in the way to truth, cannot be denied; though, at the ſame time, it muſt be acknowledged, that all the truths to which we have objected are attended with evidence ſuperior to the gloom in which they are involved. But will it be ſaid that theſe evidences are demonſtrative? Are they ſuch as place the human intellect beyond doubt or heſitation? By no means. Much time may be ſpent in honeſt, painful, and anxious inquiry; reaſon may long wander by her own uncertain twilight, and never extricate herſelf

herſelf from the mingled maze of truth and error in which ſhe is placed.—Such was the helpleſs ſtate of human underſtanding, when our compaſſionate Creator revealed his will, formerly by the Patriarchs and Prophets, and in theſe laſt days by his Son Jeſus Chriſt. This brings us, in the *ſecond* place, to ſhew,

SECTION II.

THAT the evidences which ſupport Chriſtianity are equally ſtrong, and more univerſally intelligible than thoſe of natural religion.

WHOEVER, with the moſt honeſt intentions, would attempt to compare the evidences, or ſtate the difficulties of natural and and revealed religion, muſt expect to meet with the common objection, that he ſhakes the foundation to fix the ſuperſtructure; that he pays revelation a compliment at the expence of nature; that he detracts from one diſpenſation of God, to enhance another. But the fallacy of thoſe cavils will eaſily appear,

appear, when it is conſidered, that, in our view of natural religion, the arguments are related, not obſcured; and the difficulties recapitulated, not created. If, by repreſenting things as they are, and comparing them one with another, ſome ſhould loſe, and others gain by the contraſt; ſurely this can reflect no blame on the impartial comparer. Do we then derogate from this excellent faculty of reaſon? God forbid. Though dim and depraved by hereditary darkneſs, and by ſuperinduced prejudices, ſtill it retains many traces of the divine ſimilitude; ſtill its heavenly features, however diſguiſed, aſſert the ſublimity of its origin. Reaſon, it muſt be acknowledged, can ſurvey her own form, and recogniſe her own operations; ſhe can look through material nature, and inveſtigate the chain of cauſes and effects, by which the vaſt and complex machine is preſerved and regulated; ſhe can explore, to an indefinite extent, the various modifications and relations of ſpace and quantity; ſhe can diſcern the conſtitution of moral agents, detect their motives, and judge from what characters and diſpoſitions their actions flow; ſhe can weigh the force of moral evidence, determine the veracity

city of teſtimonies, and fix the degree of credit which they deſerve. But when ſhe extends the ſphere of her viſion to the nature, attributes, and counſels of that Being who is immenſe and eternal, can we wonder to find her loſt in the abyſs of Deity? All our percipient powers are ſuited to the objects with which it is proper we ſhould be moſt converſant. Minuteneſs and magnitude equally elude our corporeal ſenſes, when the objects in which they exiſt are too great or too ſmall. The mighty orb whoſe ſurface we inhabit, is but partially beheld, even by ſuch eyes as command the moſt extenſive proſpects; and how many myriads of living atoms croud the ambient air, which entirely eſcape our perception? Is it then ſurpriſing, that our internal ſtructure ſhould be fitted for thoſe objects, in which, during the preſent period of its progreſs, it is peculiarly concerned?

THE evidences of Chriſtianity are either external and poſitive, as the teſtimony by which it is ſupported, the viſible interpoſitions of God in its favour, the accompliſhment of prophecy, and others of the ſame kind; or they are intrinſic, and conſiſt in its

its congruity to the nature of God and man, or in the real and bliſsful communications of the Holy Spirit with the human ſoul.

It muſt be obſerved here, that from the nature and eſſence of different truths, different kinds and degrees of evidence become neceſſary. Relations between ideas merely intellectual can only be aſcertained by reaſon; but ſenſe alone, whether in an immediate or ſecondary way, is the proper and ultimate judge of facts. Reaſon may indeed examine and correct the inſtruments or medium of ſenſation; but we cannot prove, by abſtract argument, that any event has, or has not happened. Neither can there be any appeal from the teſtimony of ſenſe, in its right and and natural ſtate; for the very materials on which the mind muſt form her concluſions are ſenſible: ſo that the deciſion of reaſon concerning ſenſible objects, muſt depend on principles originally derived from ſenſation. We may indeed determine the rectitude of one ſenſe by another, or by itſelf in other circumſtances; but, beyond this, reaſon will not carry us. When, therefore, any matter of fact appears to the mind ſupported by the fulleſt

fulleſt ſenſible evidence, it ought from that moment to become a principle of action; but eſpecially when a ſeries of connected facts join their force to eſtabliſh one general concluſion. Theſe are the circumſtances of the witneſſes that atteſt Chriſtianity. If they themſelves are deceived, the deluſion muſt be conſiſtent, ſucceſſive, and uniform. It muſt be an effectual change in all the natural avenues of perception. An interpoſition of this kind is unaccountable from all the powers of nature, and muſt conſequently be the work of ſome ſuperior agent. Since then a miracle muſt be ſuppoſed, whether is it more reaſonable to believe the change produced in the ſenſe of perceiving, or the object perceived? The one is an action worthy of God; the other would be mere trick and childiſh impoſition. If it is urged, that the witneſſes are intereſted to deceive, we ſhould be glad to know how. Were their views ambitious or lucrative? Had they not known before, experience now ſenſibly taught them, that ignominy and poverty were all the immediate portion they could expect. They knew, both from the nature of things, and from the dictates of their Maſter, that

the beginning of their taſk was a final and an effectual adieu to eaſe and pleaſure. They had no proſpect of aggrandiſing themſelves; for they relate their own faults, and thoſe of their brethren, with candour and impartiality. Nor, for the ſame reaſon, could their end be to raiſe the public character of their nation. They were at once to combat popular and philoſophical prejudices. All the force of cuſtom, and all the propenſities of corrupted nature were againſt them. With theſe difficulties they were deſtined to ſtruggle, independent of any human reſource or viſible aſſiſtance. Nor were they internally qualified for ſo arduous a taſk by thoſe advantages which the philoſophers and Rabbins of the times ſo loudly boaſted. Uninſtructed but by God himſelf, their wiſdom eclipſed all the ſophiſtical knowledge which malice, cunning, or prejudice could collect againſt them.

As theſe evidences are clear and convincing, ſo have they almoſt the force of intuitive truth. For they are not concluſions emerging from a long and laborious ſearch but pour their radiance on the mind at once

and

and exibit, at one view, the full conviction of their reality. Neither are they confined to the closet, but open and perceptible to every rational creature. Nor can any manifestations of truth be more simple and natural than those of sense and testimony. Besides, it ought to be considered, that, in natural religion, the very principles of inquiry led us to the difficulties we found; whereas, in the present case, no such difficulties are, or can be implied in sensible impressions, or proper testimonies.

We come now to the arguments in favour of Christianity resulting from prophecy. But this is a field so capacious, that we can only take a cursory view of the most conspicuous objects which it presents. Let it however be observed, in the first place, That if prophecy be susceptible of any interpretation, there must be one meaning more suitable to it than all others, which is consequently its genuine explication. Though therefore any event may, in some circumstances, be adapted to certain prophecies; yet if the occurrence predicted be not equal to the prediction in its whole nature and extent, then must it

be referred to ſome other object: Nor is there any abſurdity in ſuppoſing one event prefigured by another, or one prophecy equally ſignificant of both; whilſt its ultimate completion is only found in the laſt and greateſt. Theſe obſervations will ſolve the objection which modern infidelity boaſts as one of her moſt important diſcoveries.

OTHER evaſive arguments have been invented by the obſtinate Jews, to elude the force of particular predictions; but theſe pertinacious ſophiſts have only diſcovered the impotence of human knowledge, when it forgets its proper ſphere, and oppoſes the Spirit of God. For though a number of particular prophecies ſhould remain inſcrutable to us; yet if, in the general tenor of prophetic writings received both by Jews and Chriſtians, ſome grand and important revolutions, as well in the natural as moral world, be implied, which are now actually accompliſhed; then is the validity of prophecy in general confirmed.

NOR will it avail the cauſe of error to darken particular oracles by the unavoidable imperfection

perfection of language. For the particular facts which they imply, are either neceſſarily promotive of the grand events in which all the prophecies terminate; or ſo cloſely connected with them, that prejudiced inquirers alone can miſtake them.

ATTEMPTS to render particular prophecies equivocal, from analogy of circumſtances, are no leſs vain: For though any preſage ſhould be, in ſome meaſure, explicable by a particular occurrence; yet if it correſponds not to the figures by which it is ſignified in their utmoſt latitude, the interpretation muſt ſtill remain imperfect, and cannot therefore be the ultimate intention of the divine Spirit. Hence it will follow, that if the ſolutions offered by us are moſt agreeable both to the general ſcope and particular ends of prophecy, they have the beſt right to our aſſent.

To recapitulate all the prophecies which were ſignificant of the Chriſtian diſpenſation, and are ultimately accompliſhed in it, would be a work incompatible with my preſent deſign, which is only to compare the evidences

vidences of natural and revealed religion, that from thence it may appear, which of the two involves the ſtrongeſt conviction, and which is beſt adapted to the capacities and improvements of mankind in general. For this end, it will be ſufficient only to enumerate a few of theſe prophecies concerning the nature, incarnation, offices, miracles, doctrines, life, death, and reſurrection of Jeſus, in which the divine Spirit gives its teſtimony, in the cleareſt and moſt conſpicuous manner, to the goſpel.

THAT the divine and human natures were to be united in the ſame perſon, appears from that enmity which God declares he will place between the ſeed of the woman, and the adherents of the ſerpent; and from that ſolemn filiation, thus recited by the Pſalmiſt as the fixed decree of God, "Thou art my "ſon, this day have I begotten thee;" and from that other declaration, "God, thy God, "hath anointed thee." It is alſo plain from the injunction given to the prophet, "thou "ſhalt call his name IMMANUEL," a word in its primary ſignification importing, a God connected with human nature, and reſiding amongſt

amongſt men. It likewiſe merits our attention, that this miraculous child was to be born of a virgin; ſee Iſaiah, chap. vii. 14. collated with Matth. i. 23. His holineſs, and the eſtabliſhment of his religion among the nations, is thus predicted by Iſaiah, chap. xlii. 1. "Behold my ſervant whom "I uphold, mine elect in whom my ſoul "delighteth: I have put my ſpirit upon him, "he ſhall bring forth judgment to the Gen-"tiles." And by Daniel in theſe words, which alſo imply the time of his arrival, "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy "people, and upon thy holy city, to finiſh "the tranſgreſſion, and to make an end of "ſins, and to make reconciliation for iniqui-"ty, and to bring in everlaſting righteouſ-"neſs, and to ſeal up the viſion and prophe-"cy, and to anoint the Moſt Holy." This diſtinguiſhed æra is no leſs plainly pointed out by Moſes, when he tells us, Gen. xlix. 10. that, "the ſceptre ſhall not depart from "Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his "feet, until Shiloh come, and unto him "ſhall the gathering of the people be." The word SHILOH, by the ſeventy interpreters, is rendered *the accompliſhment of the promiſes*;

a ſenſe of which the word can only be ſuſceptible, from its reference to that important event to which the general ſpirit of the prophecy leads us. But it deſerves to be remarked, that as, after its wandering ſtate, the firſt reſidence of the tabernacle was at Shiloh; ſo the perſon who ſhould once more fix the ſtate of his church, by terminating the duration of typical rites, was properly ſignified by that name. There are likewiſe paſſages in Daniel and Iſaiah, though too numerous, and too long for quotation, which mark the period in the New Teſtament ſignified by *the fulneſs of time*, to be during the fourth monarchy, and within the ſeventy years commencing from the publication of the edict for the return of the Jews from Babylon, and, in ſhort, during the continuance of the ſecond temple. For the God of Hoſts declared by Haggai, that then "the "deſire of all nations ſhould come," whoſe glory ſhould fill that houſe, and render it more illuſtrious than the former; and by Malachi, in whom the Spirit likewiſe teſtifies, "that a "meſſenger ſhould prepare his way before "him, when the Lord whom they ſought "ſhould ſuddenly come to his temple, even "the

" the meſſenger of the covenant, in whom they " delighted." This harbinger of incarnate divinity is undoubtedly the ſame whom other prophets underſtood by the perſon, who, " coming in the ſpirit and power of Elias, " was as the voice of one crying in the de- " ſert, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make " his paths ſtraight;" which clearly mark the character of John the Baptiſt, who preceded our Saviour.

It farther appears, that Jeſus was born at Bethlehem, the very place diſtinguiſhed by God himſelf for that event, when, by Micah, he thus addreſſes the city: " But thou " Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little " among the thouſands of Judah, yet out of " thee ſhall he come forth unto me that is " to be ruler in Iſrael: whoſe goings forth " have been from of old, from everlaſting." This, compared with the ſpeech of the angels, Luke ii. 11. ought to ſtrike the mind of incredulity with irreſiſtible conviction. Thus alſo the prophets have deduced the Meſſiah; from Abraham, for " in him (according to Moſes) ſhall all nations be bleſſed;" from Iſaac, for " in Iſaac (ſays

" the ſame inſpired author) ſhall thy ſeed be " called;" from Jacob, for " a ſtar ſhall a- " riſe out of Jacob, and a ſceptre ſhall pro- " ceed from Iſrael;" and from Judah, as it appears in the ſublime and pathetic addreſs of his expiring father, who, in the moſt bold and lofty figures, deſcribes his ſon's behaviour, and that of his deſcendents, till the arrival of SHILOH. The original ſignification of the Hebrew word, as applied to a perſon, ſeems to be a *Peace-maker* or *Saviour:* And from the Jewiſh hiſtorians it is evident, that the tribe of Judah not only continued diſtinct in itſelf, but retained peculiar marks of precedency, and produced a ſucceſſion of monarchs, which, beginning in David, reached even to the Babyloniſh captivity. After which, regaining the ſupreme power, it continued to preſide, with little interruption, except from the Maccabees, till the acceſſion of Herod, who aſcended the throne under the tuition of Rome, and, at the birth of our Saviour, rendered himſelf infamous by the execrable murder which he inflicted upon the infants, leſt in his perſon the royal dignity ſhould again return to Judah. Laſtly, They deduce his genealogy

genealogy from David, from whom the Almighty promiſes, by the mouth of Jeremiah, "to raiſe a righteous Branch." All theſe circumſtances plainly unite in the birth of Jeſus, whoſe deſcent is clearly derived from the patriarchs and the king by the evangeliſts.

WITH relation to his character and offices, any modeſt and impartial inquirer may be ſatisfied from an attentive peruſal of the 2d and 110th pſalms, and from the 53d chapter of Iſaiah; where you will find the perſon ſo exactly delineated, his functions ſo preciſely ſpecified, and the ſtate of his kingdom ſo ſtrongly painted, as they are afterwards diſcovered in the goſpel, that invincible prejudice alone can reſiſt the ſacred effulgence of theſe divine truths. With no leſs ſublimity and accuracy do the prophets expatiate on theſe admirable exertions of ſupernatural power which conſpicuouſly ſhewed the ſuperior dignity of our Redeemer, ſince the laws of nature can only be ſuſpended or reverſed by her almighty Superintendant. The different ſituations in which he acted, and the ſublime doctrines which he taught, are alſo deſcribed by theſe inſpired ſages

with great perſpicuity; when they inform us, that God would raiſe up a Prophet in Iſrael, whoſe words ſhould be immediately inſpired from heaven, and who ſhould ſpeak all that his Lord commanded him, Deut. xviii. 18; when they aſſure us, that a period ſhall come, in which "many nations "ſhall ſay, let us go up to the mountain of "the Lord, and to the houſe of the God of "Jacob, and he will teach us of his ways, "and we will walk in his paths: for the "law ſhall go forth of Zion, and the word "of the Lord from Jeruſalem," Micah iv. 2.; and when they tell us, That "the eyes of "the blind ſhall then be opened, and the "ears of the deaf expanded; that the lame "ſhall leap like harts, and the dumb expreſs "their exultation with their tongues." Thus the diſciples of John, when ſolemnly ſent to inquire of Jeſus who he was, are deſired to inform their maſter what they had heard and ſeen; that "the blind received their ſight, "the deaf heard, and the lame walked." As events previous to the birth of our Saviour were clearly foretold, that they might be the ſignals of his appearance; ſo the moſt important viciſſitudes of human life which happened

happened poſterior to his arrival, and are, in ſome meaſure, its conſequences, have been diſcovered by the ſame omniſcient Spirit. For Daniel, after ſpecifying the time of this important occurrence, adds, that the "Meſ-"ſiah ſhould be cut off, not for himſelf, but "for his people:" Soon after which, that the city ſhould be deſtroyed, its end accompanied with an inundation, and deſolation ſhould attend the progreſs of the war till its deſtruction. Zechariah affirms, that on that day ſhould be extirpated the very name of idols, and their falſe divinities no longer adored in Iſrael. In vain is it objected among the Jews, that, by the prophetical account, their Meſſiah ſhould be inveſted with external dominion, and appear in all the magnificence of a royal conqueror; ſince it is plain, that the glory of his kingdom was not deſcribed as conſiſting in outward power and authority, nor in the noiſe and parade of viſible triumphs; but, on the contrary, his perſon and character, whilſt on earth, were marked by a number of humbling circumſtances. For his compatriots "hid "their faces from him; he was deſpiſed "and rejected by his fellow-creatures, a man

"of

" of ſorrows, and familiarly acquainted with " grief." He is likewiſe deſcribed as entering Jeruſalem on an aſs's colt. Nor did the celeſtial oracles ever point him out as the temporal deliverer of Judea, who ſhould once more reſtore it to independent authority, and exerciſe a regal power over all its children. Even his ſpiritual kingdom, which the prophets delineated, was not intended for the Jews excluſive of others, nor deſigned to comprehend all the natural deſcendents of their primogenitors.

THUS far concerning the validity and accompliſhment of prophecy in Jeſus. Now if the teſtimony of witneſſes, as the immediate ſpectators of the facts which they relate, can merit our confidence, how much more cogent is that of men, who, by inſpiration, relate a ſucceſſion of events, conſiderable in their number, peculiar in their nature, remote in their completion, and important in their effects, when, in the progreſs of human affairs, theſe very events at laſt ariſe in every circumſtance correſpondent to the original diſcovery?

AGAIN,

AGAIN: The evidence of any revelation has been ſaid to conſiſt in the excellence of its doctrines, and their congruity to the nature of God and man. But as this topic has been treated with great accuracy by others, and even occaſionally by myſelf, it may perhaps be leſs neceſſary to give a minute detail of it in this place. Let us therefore only recapitulate thoſe principles which are eſſential to the Chriſtian religion, ſo far as they are conducive to the illuſtration of our preſent deſign; in which it is propoſed to ſhew, by fair arguments, that the doctrines of the goſpel are at leaſt equally evident, and much more conſolatory than thoſe which reſult from reaſon and the light of nature.

As man is endued with the powers of perception and action, theſe faculties, eſſential to his frame, muſt have their proper objects. Hence the indiſſoluble relation of human nature to truth and good. I call it *indiſſoluble*; becauſe, notwithſtanding our preſent degeneracy, truth and good are ſtill the immutable objects of our purſuit. But precipitated by violent impreſſions, ungovernable appetites, temerary judgments, or falſe opinions,

opinions, we miſtake reſemblances for things, and, deceived by ſimilar appearances, explore ſubſtantial truth and good, where, in reality, they cannot be found. Yet this wrong direction of our views and efforts deſtroys not our firſt propoſition, that man, as poſſeſſed of intelligence and motion, is inviolably related to truth and good. For, by his perceptive faculties, he is qualified to diſtinguiſh agreeable from diſagreeable, real from fictitious impreſſions; and, by his active powers, he is enabled and impelled to ſeek, obtain, and cultivate ſuch as yield ſubſtantial delight; or reject their contraries. Hence every principle of action eſſentially implies ſomething to be known, and ſomething to be purſued or ſhunned. Thus the Chriſtian religion partly relates to faith, and partly to practice. Its theory conſiſts in the knowledge of God and man; its precepts are the duties reſulting from theſe diſcoveries. This ſcheme, under each of theſe forms, ſo far as our plan propoſed will permit, we ſhall conſider.

In the Chriſtian ſyſtem, then, we are taught to believe, that there is one eternal, indiviſible,

indiviſible, ſelf-exiſtent, almighty, omniſcient, and infinitely good and juſt Being, who originally formed, and continually ſuperintends, that univerſe which is the product of his omnipotent word; that he conducts every revolution, whether of rational, conſcious, progreſſive, or inanimate exiſtence, with the moſt unerring and conſummate rectitude, but each by laws adapted to their various natures. Thus, whilſt the inſenſible creation is moved by attraction and impulſe alone, thoſe who partake the nobler gifts of conſciouſneſs, reaſon, and freedom, are conducted and determined by uniform inſtincts, ſenſible impreſſions, or moral motives, according to their different degrees of perfection.

In this eſſential union eternally ſubſiſt three diſtinct Perſons; diſtinct not in their eſſence nor attributes, but in their properties and relations; the Father eternally begetting the Son, the Son eternally begotten of the Father, and the Holy Ghoſt eternally proceeding from both. This infinitely perfect Being, in the moſt proper period of his ineffable duration, created man, and impreſſed him with his own image. But, to diffuſe

fraternal ſentiments, and to eſtabliſh a tender relation amongſt all the ſpecies, he wiſely ordained the whole race to ſpring from two original repreſentatives, one father and one mother. From theſe, as participants of reaſon and choice, he exacted ſuch terms as, in their own nature, were equally incumbent on all their deſcendents, even univerſal, perfect, and implicit obedience to all his commands. But as the glory of God is moſt effectually diſplayed in the happineſs of his creatures, ſo the good of his intelligent offſpring muſt have been peculiarly deſigned in their formation.

THUS man, as a moral agent, had faculties adapted to the perception and attainment of ſubſtantial good. Theſe taught him to diſcern not only what it was, but alſo to purſue it by the moſt certain and practicable means. Thus did the moſt eſſential propenſities of his frame, and, of courſe, the moſt important actions of his conduct, coincide with the will of his Creator. His obedience therefore could not be tried, by enjoining ſuch a character and behaviour as, prior to that commandment, he might naturally be

expected

expected to aſſume; ſo that the ſignal of his obedience could either be no effectual teſt, or muſt have been indifferent in its own nature, ſince God could never inculcate what was intrinſically evil. Superficial thinkers, when they pronounce it inconſiſtent with the divine attributes to damn the whole race of mankind, becauſe their progenitors eat an apple, forget, that the crime conſiſted not in the ſimple action, but in that depravity of heart, that violation of obedience, which it involved. It would be wiſe in ſuch to recollect, that all actions, merely as ſuch, are equivocal, and only to be characteriſed as good or evil by the diſpoſitions which animate, and the effects which ſucceed them.

MAN having diſobeyed his Maker and his Sovereign, not only polluted his nature and debilitated his powers, but became obnoxious to death here and perdition hereafter. All the ſtreams which flowed from this tainted ſource, partook its malignant qualities. Human life became one ſucceſſion of guilt and ſorrow, one race devoted to error and involved in miſery, which were alternately inſtructed and chaſtiſed, as it appear-

ed moſt conducive to the ends of divine adminiſtration, till the unerring wiſdom of Heaven ſelected from the reſt of mankind a peculiar people, who, under its own immediate tuition, governed by laws which were confirmed with its own ſanction, and placed in a ſituation remote from a vicious and idolatrous world, were thus prepared and deſtined at once to facilitate and confirm the plan adopted by celeſtial wiſdom for the recovery of human affairs.

FROM theſe the Son of God aſſumed his human nature, and, in that character, enlightened the world with ſuch wiſe and excellent precepts both for life and ſalvation, as, if properly obſerved, muſt infallibly render us happy in all the periods of our being. He taught us, that the native ſource of all religious or ſocial duties was love to God, and benevolence for man, as theſe ſentiments were variouſly modified by our different relations to each; that our duty to God was dictated by the excellency of his nature, the number and importance of his benefits, the various relations in which he is diſcovered to us, and the different circumſtances of

our

our nature, from whence theſe connections reſult. His infinite power ſhould naturally inſpire us with aſtoniſhment and awe; his conſummate wiſdom, with reverence and admiration; his boundleſs goodneſs, with love, gratitude, and eſteem; his inflexible juſtice, with veneration and watchfulneſs; his univerſal preſence, with different motives and ſentiments, according to the different reports of conſcience, in its reviews of our temper and conduct. But when theſe perfections are preſented to reaſon, as exerted in the production, preſervation, and improvement of our exiſtence, all the ſentiments formerly impreſſed by theſe ſurpriſing and amiable views of Deity, will not only riſe in ardour and vivacity, but likewiſe ſpontaneouſly diſcover themſelves by ſuch external and ſenſible ſigns as are naturally ſignificant of them.

Our ſenſe of power exerted in creating and ſuſtaining the univerſe, naturally dictates to the ſoul expreſſions of dependence and admiration. Wiſdom and goodneſs engaged in the ſame ſublime and amiable taſk, impell the ſoul to pour forth all her feelings in acknowledgment and praiſe. The painful

ful perception of native indigence, the frequent and ſenſible importunities of returning want, the uncertainty of life and health, the reſtleſs fluctation of all corporeal poſſeſſions and enjoyments, force the heart and mind, by an irreſiſtible impulſe, to effuſe their unpremeditated wiſhes before their Creator. Conſciouſneſs of guilt ſhews the neceſſity of expiation, and that original impurity, which we feel mixed with all our ſentiments and actions, is a living and expreſſive leſſon, that ſanctification is indiſpenſible to our happineſs.

SINCE therefore we feel our nature incapable of reſtitution by its own powers; ſince we can neither atone for our crimes, nor regain our primitive rectitude, we muſt have recourſe to God for both. Accordingly JESUS, as the great repreſentative of our nature, having fulfilled all its obligations, and pointed out the true and living way to eternal happineſs, both by his examples and his precepts; at length gave himſelf a ranſom for our guilt, and re-aſcended in his human nature to the right hand of his Father, from whence he ſhall once more return, in all the majeſty

majeſty of diſplayed omnipotence, to judge his creatures.

It is impoſſible for man to merit any thing from God; yet thoſe who have lived agreeably to his example and injunctions ſhall riſe with him to everlaſting life, and thoſe of a contrary character ſink to endleſs perdition. Such are the theological views inſpired by the goſpel.

The duties which it dictates towards our neighbour, though often more particularly delineated, are ſummed up in this ſhort precept, To do to others whatever, in ſimilar circumſtances, we might reaſonably expect from them. But on theſe doctrines it is leſs neceſſary to expatiate, as they only ſuperadd the eternal and revealed authority of God to the univerſal and permanent obligations of nature and morality, improved and refined.

The ſame thing may be ſaid concerning thoſe duties which we owe to ourſelves; they natively ariſe from our frame and circumſtances. Chriſtianity adds no new extrinſic

trinſic or difficult obſervances; the diſpoſitions which it preſcribes as eſſential to a perfect character, and the offices which genuinely ariſe from them, are the dictates of Wiſdom intent on the happineſs of her children. To this even the precepts of mortification are no exception. But theſe have been ſo rigidly taught, and the principles from which they flow ſo diffuſely treated by other philoſophers, that the natural theologiſt, or moral ſtudent, can, with no propriety, impute to the Chriſtian religion as a fault, what the ſevere Stoic and relaxed Epicurean have conſpired to inculcate as eſſential to human felicity. This however we have treated more fully in a diſcourſe concerning the true dignity and happineſs of man.

THE influences of the divine Spirit have likewiſe been hinted as arguments for the reality of Chriſtian doctrine. JESUS, in that valedictory oration, from whence the paſſage now under our conſideration is taken, repeatedly promiſes his diſciples "another "Comforter, even the Spirit of truth, whom "the world could not receive;" becauſe, immerſed in the prejudices of ſenſe, and bewildered in the mazes of error, their perceptive

ceptive faculties were too groſs to ſee him, their apprehenſions too turbid and obtuſe to know him. In conſequence of a promiſe ſo frequently reiterated, the Holy Ghoſt deſcended on the apoſtles, with viſible marks of divine interpoſition, before their departure from Jeruſalem. But the operations of this celeſtial Power are now leſs conſpicuous, both in their viſible and internal effects; ſo that the conviction of their own reality, and of the truths which they teſtify, can be no where ſo lively and permanent, as in the ſouls which they immediately irradiate and refine. Nor is it ſtrange that the natural man ſhould not diſcern the things of the Spirit; for, in all other caſes, a ſimple perception can only be excited by its proper object. The ideas of ſound and colour, of proportion and ſymmetry, of beauty and harmony, are never found in the mind, till the objects by which theſe pleaſing ſenſations or emotions are inſpired have been preſented to our obſervation. How then ſhould we rightly apprehend the nature and effects of communicated grace, before they are felt? or how can we explain to others ſenſations for which language has no words, and to

which the perſons whom we would enlighten have no feelings analogous in their own minds? Beſides, the influences of the Spirit in ſuggeſting motives to the underſtanding, in arming the conſcience with ſuperior energy, or in warming and refining the nobler affections, frequently co-operate with the natural faculties of the ſoul, and is not to be diſtinguiſhed from them. But though the immediate interpoſition of theſe ſupernatural cauſes be often imperceptible, yet the effects which they produce are nevertheleſs real and ſenſible: nor can we otherwiſe account for thoſe inſtantaneous and total reformations which have ſometimes appeared in the human temper and conduct, from the groſſeſt and moſt habitual depravity, to virtue and goodneſs.

COMMUNION between God and the ſoul has been univerſally admitted amongſt the religious tenets of every age and country; and, without the illuminations of a Spirit to whom all the revolutions of futurity were obvious, it would be impoſſible to give any ſolution of thoſe prophecies, and their correſpondent

reſpondent events, which we have formerly reviewed. From theſe reflections it muſt follow, that though infidelity cannot feel, yet neither can ſhe refute, the reality and effects of inſpiration. Believers indeed may neither be able to communicate their impreſſions, nor the evidences which attend them, to other minds; yet the evidences themſelves are no leſs rational and perſuaſive to thoſe underſtandings which feel their energy.

It has been objected, That ſuch ſupernatural impulſes would be incompatible with freedom of action. But ſurely if advice and inſtruction are compatible with liberty and choice, the divine Spirit impreſſes no other violence on the human will. Our faculties are neither annihilated nor ſuſpended in their progreſs, but enlightened and aided by theſe emanations of ſuperior wiſdom. All the powers eſſential to man, as an accountable creature, are indulged in full and free exertion; ſo that every attainment in virtue, every relapſe in vice, may be aſcribed or imputed to the ſoul with equal propriety as the genuine effects of her own operations.

IT remains then, in the *third* place, that we compare the difficulties that occur in natural and revealed religion.

SECTION III.

IF the votaries of natural religion would be conſiſtent with themſelves, let them remember, that, upon ſome occaſions, gaping wonder and indecent ridicule are certain indications of ignorance and folly. This precaution will ſuppreſs their aſtoniſhment, and chaſtiſe their wit, when they obſerve the teachers of Chriſtianity recommending faith with ſo much ardour and aſſiduity. For the apoſtles tell us with one voice, that from this maternal grace all the other virtues lineally deſcend; and that by faith alone we are juſtified and ſaved.

THE freethinker, who laughs at this doctrine, forgets, that all the liberal or mechanical arts preſuppoſe theory as indiſpenſibly neceſſary to practice: and ſhall the art of life, to which all others are ſubſervient, proceed upon no principles at all?

SURELY

SURELY natural religion itſelf, however ſimple and univerſal, muſt enjoin its pupils to believe that God exiſts, and that he is the rewarder of thoſe who diligently ſeek him; otherwiſe, for what end is he worſhipped? Nothing can be more abſurd than to maintain a poſſibility of rational action without motives. Motives eſſentially imply a perſuaſion that one courſe of action is preferable to another, or that means and ends are more or leſs eligible or practicable. What then is this perſuaſion but faith? They who imagine this divine principle a blind or unenlightened impulſe, which ſuperſedes the force of reaſon, and confronts the underſtanding in all its determinations, groſsly miſrepreſent it.

THE province of faith is not to counteract, but to aſſiſt reaſon, and to determine concerning ſuch objects as lie beyond its proſpect. The intricacies which have already embarraſſed our ſearch, when exploring the principles of natural religion, and other obſtacles which may ſtill occur, may ſufficiently convince us, that there is an intellectual, as well as material horizon, in which

which the proſpect of the ſoul, no leſs than of the body, terminates in darkneſs and confuſion. Effectually to diſcover ſuch truths as are eſſentially previous to action, and perſpicuous to reaſon, we muſt frequently take a remote and indiſtinct view of others which are too ſublime for our comprehenſion. Thus we know that God exiſts from eternity to eternity; but what eternity, as a divine attribute, is, we can by no means conceive. For all our notions of duration ariſe from a perception of continued exiſtence, divided by the ſucceſſion of our own ideas, or the revolutions of external objects. But the divine knowledge is one undivided idea, and the divine operation one continued act; from neither of which the idea of ſucceſſion can proceed.

We are alſo convinced that God is one; yet all attempts to demonſtrate this unity from reaſon have proved abortive. If it be ſaid, that ſelf-exiſtence can only belong to one being, I ſhould be glad to know why; for it is not ſufficient to deny the neceſſity of ſuppoſing more. One infinite being may ſerve all the purpoſes of creation and providence;

dence; but this is no reaſon why others equally perfect may not exiſt. They deſerve no better name than *metaphyſical quibblers*, who affirm, that one infinite being exhauſts the whole genus or kind, and therefore two are impoſſible: For we might as well be told, that there could be but one infinite exiſtence, becauſe ſuch a one would neceſſarily abſorb and contain all the others; yet we find the exiſtence of God highly compatible with that of inferior ſpirits, and even of matter. Number, ſpace, and duration, are infinite; yet theſe infinites do not one devour another. Nay matter, though finite in itſelf, is proved by philoſophers infinitely diviſible: each infiniteſimal of which may again be infinitely divided; yet theſe infinites, though ſubordinate one to another *ad infinitum*, are ſtill real and diſtinct. Why then, by the ſame reaſoning, may there not be infinite beings involving infinite beings without number? But it is ſaid, That from the unity of deſign in nature, the unity of its deſigning agent may be inferred; for different beings engaged in the creation and government of things, would have been different in their counſels and operations. This argument

gument however is equally fallacious, ſince any number of beings infinitely perfect muſt have adopted the ſame plan, and the ſame method of execution; ſo that whatever number of creators were employed, their productions would ſtill be the beſt of all poſſible ſyſtems, and conſequently the deſigns of each would be one. There is a much plainer proof, "Hear, O Iſrael, the Lord thy God "is one Lord." Once more, "There be "that are called Gods many, and Lords "many; yet to us there is but one Lord," &c.

AGAIN: We believe that God created the world in time; for if it ſubſiſted from eternity, it ſubſiſted prior to creation, and therefore had no need of a maker; but if it was formed in time, what could induce infinite wiſdom, power, and goodneſs, to paſs an unactive eternity before they began to operate? for this muſt have happened at whatever period of duration their operations commenced. Now, ſince it is allowed, that neither the parts of ſpace, nor thoſe of duration, can be different one from another; what could determine the divine mind in favour of any particular

particular portion, for the period or ſituation of his works? For as no ſingle part involved a cauſe of preference in itſelf, why did the ſupreme Reaſon chuſe any at all? Though this will not diſprove the fact of creation, it ſhews how little we are qualified to account for it.

FURTHER: We are perſuaded that God foreknows and governs all the tranſactions of his boundleſs and everlaſting dominion. One of two things muſt be granted, that all events are either certain or contingent. But if the revolutions of the univerſe be fortuitous, then the divine preſcience can only perceive them as ſuch, and the moſt ſacred counſels of God muſt proceed upon probabilities alone. If events be certain, they muſt either be determined by the Deity, or ſome extrinſic power. Such a power to regulate the courſe of things, without his interpoſition, muſt be ſuperior to his own; ſo that God is either not omnipotent, or ſolely concerned in the government of things. Hence he muſt determine what courſe of action is purſued, and what degree of happineſs or miſery ſhared by every creature of

his hand, in all the periods of its being. From this will follow conſequences of no leſs importance than the doctrines of election and reprobation, ſo dreadful to ſome philoſophers. Now let theſe all-diſcerning ſages, to whom the veil of nature and providence is ſo tranſlucent, reconcile ſuch tenets with their notions of divine juſtice, or with the freedom of a moral agent.

WHEN theſe difficulties are obviated, others more formidable will ſtill remain. For, from the liberal profuſion with which conſcious and intellectual beings are ſo regularly ſupplied, we may fairly deduce the goodneſs of the univerſal Benefactor. How then could evil enter into the world? how could its empire become ſo extenſive, or its effects ſo fatal and permanent?

IT is urged, That the fall of man, by the abuſe of his original freedom, can be no ſatisfactory account of this extraordinary phenomenon. It is therefore no more than equitable to demand of the philoſopher a more plauſible ſolution. The fact is undeniable; the whole ſenſible creation feel and deplore

plore its reality. Whence then proceeded this diſtortion of nature? or why are deformity and miſery ſtill ſuffered to prevail in the works of a perfect and omnipotent Artificer? Is philoſophy ſilent? how then can ſhe pretend to fix the boundaries, or limit the duration of evil, whilſt its origin and progreſs remain inſcrutable myſteries? Have we ſo fully explored the influence of exemplary pains inflicted on moral beings, ſo exactly aſcertained the full extent and ultimate ends of divine government, that we can appoint evil its proper deſtination, or preſcribe the period of its continuance, and the end of its progreſs. If we can actually trace but a few links in the chain of providence, why do we ſo loudly recriminate, when we hear of eternal puniſhments?

THE univerſal preſence of Deity will be diſputed by no rational explorer of nature. It is a maxim confirmed by all who underſtand phyſical cauſes and effects, that no being can act where it is not. Muſt we then ſay with the ſchoolmen, that God is wholly and entirely preſent in every point of ſpace; yet, at the ſame time, equally

diffuſed through the whole immenſity? Or will it not be more candid to acknowledge the general truth, without pretending that the manner of its exiſtence is intelligible?

AFTER theſe fruitleſs reſearches into the nature of the Divinity, and the conduct of his providence; is it a matter ſo incredible, that three diſtinct Perſons ſhould ſubſiſt in one indiviſible eſſence? The pretended abſurdity of three intelligent Agents, in one intelligent Agent, is not in the nature of the thing, but in the falſe conceptions of thoſe who would reduce it to an inconſiſtency. It is ſtrange to find that men, whoſe notions of perſonality, even in its moſt familiar ſenſe, are far from being clear and determined, ſhould underſtand ſo well in the divine nature, what they are at a loſs to aſcertain in their own. Are the ſame temporary and ambiguous indications of perſonal identity, by which it is aſcertained either in ourſelves or others, applicable to a perfect and immutable exiſtence? Is God the ſame yeſterday, to-day, and for ever, becauſe he has an eternal conſciouſneſs of identity, which unites all his thoughts and actions in the ſame perſon,

and,

and, by theſe recollections, diſcovers that the *Ipſe* of the paſt, is alſo the very *Ipſe* of the preſent? Or does he manifeſt the identity of his divinity to his creatures, by exhibiting external repreſentations and uniform appearances? The caſuiſtry of juriſprudential writers is famous even to a proverb; yet if any one will conſult them where they treat of perſonal rights, he will find their moſt exquiſite ſubtility miſerably puzzled in determining what conſtitutes a *perſon*. The word therefore, when cautiouſly uſed to point out a diſtinction in the divine nature which we do not underſtand, may be harmleſs and convenient; but if limited to the ſame ſenſe in which it is employed when we ſpeak of human beings, it will no more enlighten, but confound our inquiry. It is, however, ſufficient for all the purpoſes of faith, that we believe, as the ſcripture teaches, a real diſtinction between the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, without endeavouring to be wiſe above what is written, or attempting to explain that diſtinction, which to us, in our preſent circumſtances, is veiled in ſacred and impenetrable darkneſs, otherwiſe than by the obvious

vious relations and properties which it implies.

Is it for us who are ſo little acquainted with the proper means employed in the divine adminiſtration, or the ſublime and inſcrutable gradations of its procedure, to affirm, that God, in all places, and in all times, is under a moral neceſſity to put the means of happineſs in the power of men? Whether the doctrines of Chriſtianity are eſſential to human felicity, or indifferent, theſe arrogant reaſoners will find their favourite point refuted by fact. For it muſt be acknowledged, that all underſtandings are not equally capacious, nor all minds equally ſuſceptible of moral impreſſions. But though the faculties of men were allowed equal, yet the neceſſities of life require that they ſhould be differently exerted. Hence ſome are more at leiſure to cultivate their moral and rational powers, more devoted to thoſe attainments and purſuits, than others. Will it be ſaid, that the artiſan and the ſtudent, the ſavage and the philoſopher, are equally enlightened in the theory of human happineſs? Will it be maintained, that Scythia and

and Greece were in a ſituation equally favourable to moral ſpeculation, or could equally regulate their conduct by the dictates of refined humanity, and the relations of ſocial life?

CONCERNING the doctrines of merit and imputation, ſo warmly oppoſed by our antagoniſts, it may be ſufficient here to obſerve, That the word *merit*, though originally a relative term, now admits of various ſignifications. Some things are approved ultimately, and on their own account; others, as adapted to a certain end; and others, as communicating pleaſure or advantage, which deſerve returns. In the firſt of theſe ſenſes, man might be ſaid to have *merit*, when recent from the hands of his Creator; becauſe his faculties were then pure, immaculate, and fit for the original purpoſes of their formation: but, in the laſt acceptation of merit, it can with no propriety be aſcribed to man, in any period or ſituation of his being; for having received all from God, he could diſplay no excellence, nor communicate any favour, which was not derived from the divine bounty. Far from increaſing

increaſing the glory or happineſs of his Maker, he could only promote his own felicity and dignity, by exerting his powers in the ſervice of him who gave them. But when guilt had deformed the original purity of his nature, it could no longer be called *meritorious* in any ſenſe. We muſt grant, that the intrinſic worth or demerit of one perſon cannot belong to another, but by communication: yet it is certain, that the conſequences of virtue in ſome, may diffuſe their influence to others. Thus the wiſdom of a legiſlator may direct the conduct of his ſubjects; thus the goodneſs of a benefactor may ſupply the wants of his dependents; thus the frugality and induſtry of a father may enrich his children. The Saviour of men being equally inveſted with the divine and human nature, had every poſſible claim to merit. In conſequence of what he did and ſuffered, the pollution of ſin might be removed by the communication of grace, and its obligation to puniſhment cancelled by the pains and ſorrows which he endured. For though there can be no merit in ſuffering, yet the diſpoſitions exerted by the ſufferer, may be highly meritorious.——But theſe

ſubjects

ſubjects have been more copiouſly explained in our obſervations from 1 Pet. ii. 24.; from Iſaiah lv. 7.; and from Gal. vi. 14.

WE have formerly hinted, that man is a being endued with contemplative and active powers, and that, by each of theſe conſtituent parts in his frame, he is related to a different object. His underſtanding neceſſarily impells him to the inveſtigation of truth; deſire, choice, inclination, and averſion, with all his capacities of enjoyment, allure him to the purſuit of real or apparent good. Theſe, in the order of nature, are poſterior one to the other: for before any thing can be called *good*, the reality of its exiſtence and qualities muſt be aſcertained; nor can any intelligent being act without ſuch motives for ſelecting and rejecting, as are either eſſentially or apparently true. Thus, in all the principles of rational conduct, ſpeculation is naturally prior to action; becauſe upon the former neceſſarily depends the latter. Religion is therefore, with great propriety, divided into principles of faith, and rules of practice; nor is this diſtinction peculiar to Chriſtianity, but common to all religions.

In the theory of natural religion, the ſtudent may perhaps be ſurpriſed to find ſuch numerous and formidable difficulties; but who would be willing to imagine, that the light which it throws upon practice, the rules which it dictates for our conduct, are likewiſe embarraſſed, and ſuſceptible of doubt? Is it not ſtrange, that the very criterion of morality ſhould ſtill be a ſubject of heſitation and diſpute? yet ſurely no queſtion can be more proper than what determines the morality of an action.

If *the will* or *commands of a legiſlator* be the ſtandard of right and wrong, of good and evil; may we not ſtill farther inquire, how this will is recommended to our attention, how authoriſed to determine our practice? If by the power of rewards and puniſhments alone, then the moſt abject minions of tyrannical cruelty are the moſt moral of all beings. If, to avoid this rock, we ſay that theſe injunctions have intrinſic merit; we ſhould be glad to know in what this excellence conſiſts. It will doubtleſs be anſwered, In the beneficent deſign of a lawgiver, and in the happy effects of his ſtatutes. But ſtill by what avenues of internal perception does the

light of nature convey theſe notices of the divine will to the mind? Is it by the radiant emanations of truth upon the underſtanding, whence it diſcovers the eternal relations and differences of things?

LET us obſerve, that there is a wide diſtinction between the perception of logical and moral truth. The one is entirely diſpaſſionate, without yielding any pleaſure or pain, except the calm ſatisfaction ariſing from the activity of the mind, from the felicity of diſcovery, or from the force of conviction. Moral ideas, on the contrary, when preſented with all their amiable or hateful properties, are obvious to the mind at once, and branded with a turpitude, or recommended by a luſtre, a beauty, a decorum, which brightens and dignifies them, even independent of their reality. Thus the ideas of magnanimity, temperance, beneficence, when preſented to the mind, would be eſteemed objects of approbation, though never beheld in any living character.

How then do ſuch agreeable perceptions ariſe from moral ideas and relations, which

are not found in any ratio of difference or agreement in mathematics? or, in other words, if moral obligation be founded merely on the perception of relation and difference, why do not theſe abſtract truths, which reſult from all the poſſible modifications of ſpace and quantity, whoſe relations and differences are recogniſed as more fixed and permanent than any other, inſpire the ſame pleaſing or painful internal ſenſations? When I read the noble actions of Gideon, Samſon, or other aſſertors of public liberty; why ſhould they give me a joy different from the conviction, that the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right ones? Why ſhould I feel a pleaſure in relating or performing a charitable action, different from that which affects me, when I conclude with certainty that two and two make four?

BESIDES: Though it ſhould be granted that the will and commands of a legiſlator are recommended to our obſervation and obedience by their beneficent tendency; yet why ſhould the diſpoſitions which prompt, and the actions which produce public or private happineſs obtain our preference? Is the

the ſuppoſition impoſſible, that a creature may be ſo conſtituted, as to think every other being and its intereſts abſolutely indifferent to him?

NAY further: Might not a conſcious and reaſoning agent be formed, whoſe ſupreme felicity ſhould conſiſt in the miſery and torment of others? This is what the ancient Magi and Manicheans maintained, that from thence they might account for the equal prevalence of good and evil in the world. Such a poſſibility was objected to a late eminent Philoſopher who revived the doctrine of the moral ſenſe. For, according to the antagoniſts of that great man, if moral approbation or diſapprobation ſhould depend on a thing ſo arbitrary as ſenſation; why might not the great Artificer of nature create beings ſuſceptible of pleaſure from public miſery, or of pain from public happineſs?

THUS, not only the reality of moral eſſences themſelves, ſo explicitly maintained by ſome learned authors, but alſo that of the faculties by which we perceive them, are warmly

warmly diſputed. In effect, the force, the reality, the beauty, the fitneſs of moral ideas and relations are, in ſome degree, univerſally felt and recogniſed. But by what pencil are certain characters and actions illuminated with ſuch living glory, and inſcribed with ſuch vivid marks of approbation? or by what channels are theſe agreeable perceptions admitted into the mind?

Is virtue rendered lovely in our eyes, becauſe we are connected by *Benevolence* with all reaſonable and conſcious beings, whoſe characters are not deformed with vice? "No," it is replied by ſome, "Benevolence is "a blind and indiſcriminating inſtinct; it "flows at random with boundleſs effuſion "on every object which it meets."

THE principle of moral obligation therefore is a *Senſe of rectitude and order*. But do we not daily appeal from theſe to public happineſs? do we not eſtimate their very worth and exiſtence by it?

MUST we then liſten to thoſe who tell us that *Self-love* is the ſource of all our actions; and that, however diſintereſted our conduct may

may appear, it is our own intereſt alone which we inviolably purſue? Upon this hypotheſis, it will be hard to account for the liberal ſacrifices of wealth, eaſe, reputation, and even life itſelf, which have been offered for the good of others. In vain it is urged, that though the ſocial affections tend to promote the good of others, yet they are gratified in ourſelves; for all things in which we are concerned, muſt either be eligible, offenſive, or indifferent. If eligible, let us know why, if not from ſome pleaſing ſenſation immediately felt, or ſome delightful gratification probably expected. It muſt be allowed, that the immediate tendency of ſocial affection is not to our own good, but that of others. The pleaſure therefore which we feel from the completion of benevolent deſire, is not antecedent, but poſterior to that propenſity; and therefore not its cauſe, but its conſequence. Nor are we charitable, becauſe it is pleaſing to promote the good of our fellow-creatures; but, on the contrary, it is delightful to diffuſe comfort and happineſs, becauſe we are charitable. In dividing the affections, their particular modes, for the moſt part, are denominated from the objects in which they immediately terminate.

Thus

Thus the ſentiment of kindneſs between brothers, is fraternal; that of children to their parents, filial; the paſſion ſubſiſting between perſons of a different ſex, is love; the affection which unites amiable characters merely for their own merit and their ſimilarity, is friendſhip; the propenſity which we feel to oblige a benefactor, is gratitude. Why then are not the affections, which terminate in ourſelves alone, properly termed *ſelfiſh* and *intereſted?* Why are not thoſe deſires which impell us to redreſs the misfortunes or augment the felicity of others, juſtly called *benevolent* or *ſocial?* Is not this diſtinction as really founded on nature, as any other? But allowing benevolence to be the mother of the virtues, by what means is that general propenſity ſo ſuddenly and properly modified, as to operate with propriety in every particular caſe?

MUST the theory of moral ſentiments, as we have been lately told, be deduced from *Sympathy?* It may certainly be queſtioned, whether all the phenomena in the moral world can find their ſolution in this principle. What connexion has fortitude and temperance

temperance in ourſelves, or diſtributive juſtice to others, with ſympathy? Do we ſubſtitute ourſelves for others, in ſituations where others are not concerned, and where the mind is conſcious of no ſuch ſubſtitution? Are criminals deſtined to the gibbet by the ſympathy of their judges? We do not here deny, that ſympathy is the ſource of virtue; but ſimply deſire its votaries to account for all the exertions of virtue from this principle.

PERHAPS we ſtill err: Moral worth may conſiſt in the *Balance of affections*. Do we then admire this balance ultimately for itſelf, or as productive of ſome higher ends? Does the mind, in all the particular impulſes of benevolence or piety, ſurvey its own entire œconomy, before it can perceive the pleaſure ariſing from the ſentiment which it feels? Or rather, is not the ſentiment approved on its own account, without any retroſpect to its relation with the other propenſities of the mind?

WHILST the internal frame is thus anatomized to find the ſource of moral perfec-

tion and approbation, is not the tranſition eaſy from doubt concerning the inſtruments of diſcovery, to heſitation concerning the truth of what they diſcover? Nor would it be unnatural for a ſtudent of ethics to reaſon in this manner: "In every corporeal "perception, I can with as much eaſe, and "as little heſitation, aſcertain the ſenſe per-"ceiving, as the object perceived. Modi-"fications of light and colour are exhi-"bited through the eyes; ſounds approach "the ſoul by the ear; and as the capacity "of feeling is diffuſed over the whole "ſenſative frame, ſo tangible objects are ob-"vious to every part which is in contact "with them. Such likewiſe is the caſe with "my internal ſtructure. By underſtanding, "I aſcertain my ideas; by memory, I recol-"lect them; by imagination, I ſeparate or "compound them; by reaſon, I compare "them, and examine their congruities or "diverſities. But by what internal organ, "or what conſtruction of organs, do I be-"come ſenſible of thoſe reflex or ſecondary "perceptions, which have cauſed ſo much "ſpeculation? If theſe objects were ſub-"ſtantial and real in themſelves, would not

"the

" the very impreſſion of their exiſtence like-
" wiſe inform me on what ſenſe it was im-
" preſſed? Surely this might give riſe to
" ſome ſuſpicion, that thoſe ideas of beauty
" and propriety, which attend ſome characters
" and actions, are nothing but mere prejudi-
" ces favourable to human life, politically in-
" vented, wiſely diffuſed, and zealouſly tranſ-
" ferred from father to ſon, for common eaſe
" and ſafety."

THAT this concluſion, however falſe, is not unnatural, will appear from fact: for it is well known, that Mr Hobbs maintained a ſtate of nature to be a ſtate of war; and even in regular ſocieties, where ſubordination was eſtabliſhed, offices aſcertained, and laws enacted, he thought natural or artificial ſtrength the only teſt of right and wrong; or, in other words, power and right were the ſame. Thus the civil magiſtrate was only authoriſed to reward or puniſh; becauſe to him the powers of the many, which that philoſopher calls the *Leviathan*, are conſigned, and by him collectively exerted.

If we ſtill chuſe to think this ſuppoſition too abſurd for the reſult of natural and candid inquiry, let us conſult Mr Locke's Eſſay on Human Underſtanding; where, by diſproving that any practical principles can be innate, he in effect denies their reality. His acknowledgment that ethical maxims are not only true, but capable of demonſtration, is a mere verbal conceſſion, which all his arguments, both before and after, evidently tend to refute. His notions however are widely different from thoſe of Cicero and the ſages, from whom that philoſopher imbibed his principles. For, according to them, there are ſome moral offices received by the mind as perfect, and ultimately eligible on their own account: this they termed Κατόρθωμα, *perfectum*. It was only a claſs of duties ſubordinate to theſe, named Καθήκοντα, *officia media*, for which they allowed that a probable reaſon could be rendered. From the τὸ ἀγαθὸν, or *good*; from the τὸ καλὸν, or *beautiful*; from the τὸ πρεπὸν, or *decent*; which were in themſelves ſupremely amiable; theſe philoſophers eſtimated the genuine worth of characters and actions. Let us ſee how different from this is Mr Locke's opinion of morality:

morality: "I grant (ſays he) that the exiſt-
" ence of God is ſo many ways manifeſted,
" and the obedience we owe him ſo congru-
" ous to the light of reaſon, that a great
" part of mankind give teſtimony to the law
" of nature. But yet I think it muſt be
" allowed, that ſeveral moral rules may re-
" ceive from mankind a very general appro-
" bation, without either knowing or admit-
" ting the true ground of morality; which
" can only be the will and law of a God
" who ſees man in the dark, has in his
" hands rewards and puniſhments, and
" power enough to call to account the
" proudeſt offender. For God having, by
" an inſeparable connection, joined virtue
" and public happineſs together, and made
" the practice thereof neceſſary to the pre-
" ſervation of ſociety, and viſibly beneficial
" to all with whom the virtuous man has to
" do; it is no wonder that every one ſhould
" not only allow, but recommend and mag-
" nify, thoſe rules to others, from whoſe ob-
" ſervance of them he is ſure to reap advan-
" tage to himſelf." The ſame author, in another place, roundly aſſerts, that to aſk the old philoſophers why they thought vir-

tue

tue ſelf-rewarded, and eligible on its own account, was the ſame thing, as if we ſhould demand of our cotemporaries, why ſome of them preferred apples, and others cheeſe: Whence it may be naturally inferred, that he thought all prepoſſeſſions for virtue, which were not derived from authority or utility, (the loweſt motives to goodneſs in an heathen), were merely conſtitutional, and dependent on the difference of organization.

THE confuſion and fallacy of his reaſoning proceeded from the principles whence it was deduced. For he thought that thoſe who contended for innate principles, ſuppoſed our nature, at its firſt production, poſſeſſed of every moral ſentiment in their full force, and impreſſed with diſtinct notions of all the external circumſtances in which theſe ſentiments were deſigned to operate. Hence he maintained, that if practical principles were innate, they would be intuitive and univerſal. It ought however to be conſidered, that perceptions of the congruity or diſſonance attending virtue or vice, are very different from the perſuaſion inſpired by ſelf-

ſelf-evident truths. A ſentimental philoſo-ſopher would tell him, not without reaſon, that moral principles are themſelves intuitive, but their proper application demands reaſoning and inquiry. Nor does their want of univerſality diſprove their exiſtence. For, as Mr Pope emphatically demands,

> If black and white blend, ſoften, and unite
> Ten thouſand ways; is there no black nor white?

NEITHER let it be urged, that ſuch intricacies as involve the foundation of virtue, have no connexion with its practice. For, in truth, whoever inquires into the foundation of moral perceptions, muſt, by the ſame act, explore the nature of thoſe perceptions, and conſequently the propriety of ſuch actions as flow from them.

THUS we find the plaineſt dictates of natural religion, thoſe which are moſt eſſential to the regulation of life and manners, "puzzled in mazes, and perplexed with er-"rors." The revelation of JESUS, far from exploring the ſource of virtuous ſentiments, preſuppoſed their reality; and its teachers always

always appealed to theſe as pre-exiſtent in the mind; by which their hearers were capacitated to determine the propriety of thoſe precepts which they inculcated. Such then is the difference between natural and revealed theology. The one, by ſearching into the nature of facts already eſtabliſhed upon feeling and experience, obſcures their very being, and debilitates their force; the other, by aſſuming them as fixed and certain principles of action, reſtores their credibility, and corroborates their influence.

THAT the intricacies which have hitherto engaged our attention, both in theology and morals, are not the mere reſult of modern prejudices; that they are no temporary complaints, occaſioned by accidental circumſtances, but coeval with reaſon itſelf; the curious may be ſatisfied, by peruſing Cicero *De finibus*, and *De natura Deorum*. So much then for the practical difficulties of natural religion. I believe we may fairly challenge ſophiſtry and ſcepticiſm, with all their ſubtility and malice, either to point out the ſame number, or condeſcend upon any one ſo formidable in the preceptive part of

of the Chriſtian ſcheme, which is not common to every theological ſyſtem, deducing its origin and authority from one ſupremely powerful, wiſe, and good Being; or from the powers, relations, and circumſtances of human nature.

SHOULD it be demanded, how beings, whoſe actions are predetermined, can be found accountable? we might refer the queriſt to the Stoics for ſolution, who were as abſolute predeſtinarians as the moſt rigid Calviniſt: nor is the Chriſtian obliged to offer any other anſwer than what might be expected from a diſciple of Xeno. It is eſſential to a being endued with the powers of reaſon and volition, that he ſhould be determined by motives. Prepollent good, whether real or ſuppoſititious, muſt, by its very nature, command our choice, even independent of the divine decree. No predetermination of Heaven influences the will, otherwiſe than by the arrangement and application of motives. Thus all the faculties eſſential to our nature may operate with full freedom; and thus all the praiſe which it would have merited, all the blame which

it would have incurred in ſimilar circumſtances, antecedent to the divine decrees, will be found its juſt portion, as they are the genuine reſults of its conduct. Predeſtination, however, is not equally admitted by all ſects of Chriſtians. The determinations of God do not infallibly neceſſitate the bad to be happy, or the good to be miſerable; for, in the plan of providence, cauſes are no leſs neceſſary than effects, and he who is fated to miſery, muſt incur it by guilt.

SHOULD it be objected, That the Chriſtian precepts exact a perfection of which we are incapable; let it be remembered, that every ſtandard of moral rectitude which can be truly uſeful to a progreſſive agent, muſt be ſuperior to his attainments at any given period. For ſhould he reach or even approach it, his faculties ceaſe to aſpire, becauſe they have either no more improvement to hope, or too little to excite his ambition. In the fine arts, the caſe is ſtrictly parallel; and we may be abſolutely certain, that, if the moſt eminent maſters had been as ſucceſsful in their performances as their own ideas of perfection required, we never ſhould have

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ſeen the arts, of which they were enamoured, arrive at that degree of excellence, to which ſuperior genius, and a happy concurrence of external circumſtances, conducted them. Beſides, if perfections unattainable by man are exacted, ſupernatural aſſiſtances are alſo promiſed. Frailty and weakneſs are favoured with all proper allowances; ſincere intentions, and faithful, though imperfect obedience, are accepted.

ONCE more: If our adverſaries ſhould urge, that the injunctions of Chriſtianity are harſh, if not impracticable, becauſe they check the ſtrongeſt impulſes and warmeſt wiſhes of nature; let ſuch reflect, that no violence is offered to nature in a refined and rectified ſtate. Chriſtianity eradicates no principles of action, inſpired and approved by the Author of our nature; it only mortifies the redundancies, and reſtrains the luxuriance of innocent deſire; whilſt it extinguiſhes the fervour, and obliterates the ſtains of vice. But will any perſon contend, that vice is happy in its fruition, and proſperous in its iſſue, though Chriſtianity had never been known? Surely the paths of

guilt, by an eternal and irreverſible neceſſity, lead to perdition. Nor does the Almighty ſave the criminal, without reforming the degeneracy. In a word, Chriſtianity impoſes no reſtraint upon our inclinations, but ſuch as may qualify us to aſcertain the value of objects, to weigh the conſequences of things, and to preſerve the native dignity and purity of the ſoul.

It has been aſſerted, with ſome degree of triumph, that neither our Saviour nor his apoſtles inculcate friendſhip as a Chriſtian duty. The original author of this objection did not perhaps intend that it ſhould be uſed to the diſadvantage of religion. In him it was no more than a ſarcaſtic digreſſion, to puniſh the clerical ſpite and arrogance which at that time were the plague and reproach of the Epiſcopal church. But others of more ill-nature, and leſs penetration, took the hint, and propoſed it as a formal argument againſt Chriſtianity; which ſucceeding divines rendered ſtill more important and formidable, by their anſwers. Thus when the ſeeds of diſcord are kindled amongſt coachmen and porters, if ſuperior ranks ſhould catch

catch the flame, and engage in the quarrel, the folly of the city immediately ferments; the war becomes general; peers and lacqueys, beaux and chimney-ſweepers, grapple in the univerſal tumult, and all the chaos of human brutality roars. In effect, if example be more attractive than precept, the peculiar tenderneſs and intimacy which appears between JESUS and the beloved diſciple, is a motive to friendſhip beyond the force of injunction.——It merits regard, that, in every moral inſtitution, thoſe virtues which appear to the mind with a particular luſtre derived from their own free, generous, and voluntary nature, ought to be treated with ſuperior tenderneſs and dignity; and will be more effectually diffuſed by perſuaſion and example, than inforced by authority. Amongſt the more ſhining virtues, we may juſtly reckon friendſhip. It naturally ariſes from the conſtitution of a ſocial creature; but the objects of its union, the degrees and permanency of its ardour, the vigour and ſeaſons of its operation, are matters of free choice, and not to be determined by any authority, either human or divine. Hence its eſſential character is delicacy; and whatever

whatever conſtrains its liberty, exterminates its being.——Let us remark, with what Godlike benignity our Saviour recommends the ſpirit of univerſal charity to his followers. He does not aſſume the magiſterial air, the voice of thunder, or the rod of iron, to threaten them with eternal fire and brimſtone, as the puniſhment of miſanthropy: "But again, (ſays he), a new command-"ment I give unto you, That ye love one "another as I have loved you; for ſo ſhall "all men know that ye are my diſciples." When ſentiments like theſe are enjoined, and ſelected as the characteriſtic of a religion; when, by ſacred inſtitution, benevolence takes full poſſeſſion of the ſoul, can we imagine that friendſhip will not be amongſt the favourites of her lovely retinue? On the contrary, is there not ſome danger, that a mind conſtantly inured to exertions and offices of tenderneſs, may concenter all its ſoft affections in one object, and thus not only loſe the comprehenſive pleaſure ariſing from univerſal beneficence, but circumſcribe that utility, which might have diffuſed its influence through diſtant periods and extenſive nations, to one ſingle individual?

It has likewiſe been ſaid, that rewards and puniſhments are principles too ſordid and illiberal to influence a moral agent. Virtue, according to theſe refined ſages, muſt either be loved for her own charms, or not at all. The paſſion which ſhe inſpires is free, ſpontaneous, diſintereſted.—Alas! how little are theſe Gentlemen acquainted with common life? How little do they conſider, that the croud of mankind, engaged in external purſuits, and attentive to the voice of exigence alone, are ſcarcely ſuſceptible of that immaterial grace and beauty, which attracts the eyes of indolent contemplation upon regular affections, amiable diſpoſitions, or propriety of action? If the labourer and mechanic have any inward determinations to virtue, without culture, without indulgence, without light, they can only operate in particular circumſtances, by ſudden fits; they extend not to all the virtues, but are only impulſes directed upon ſome one. If they admire a character, its vices and infirmities are generally gilded and ſanctified by its amiable qualities, in ſuch a manner, that both are equally recommended to imitation. How far theſe faint impreſſions, theſe indiſtinct,

diſtinct, though lovely and neceſſary prejudices, can be principles of action; whether they are vigorous and ſteady enough to regulate life and manners, to wield the human machine with ſufficient energy and unerring rectitude; let the philoſopher judge. We forget that the very nature of a progreſſive being implies gradations. If the beſt and wiſeſt of men have not, even to this moment, aſcertained the abſolute criterion of virtue and vice by all their reſearches; how little reaſon have we to expect that the conſtant labourer, whoſe inceſſant toil for the ſubſiſtence of himſelf and his dependents ſcarcely permits him the neceſſary hours of relaxation, who never beſtowed a thought on his own internal œconomy, ſhould be very intelligent in the theory of morals? Neither is it ſo practicable as the penſive ſage may think, to initiate a mind, wholly engroſſed by its own wants and inconveniencies, in the principles of diſintereſted virtue. The ligatures that bind human ſociety, are too ſubtile for faculties immerſed in ſenſe and matter to perceive, unleſs the affections connected with them be ſufficiently ſtrong to force the mind out of itſelf,

itſelf, and extort its attention. And as the taſk of procuring and aſcertaining private utility is found difficult, ſo much more reluctant will men appear to engage in any public cauſe. This is not mere conjecture, but hypotheſis confirmed and ſupported by experience. It is therefore one of the wiſeſt and kindeſt inſtitutions of providence, that legiſlative authority ſhould give ſanction to the dictates of virtue; ſince the language of rewards and puniſhments will be univerſally underſtood, and uniform in its operations, when the mind is leſs ſenſible to thoſe pleaſing emotions which are inſpired by regularity of character, refinement of diſpoſitions, or propriety of conduct. *Diſcite juſtitiam moniti, et non temnere Divos*, is a call ſo loud and ſtriking, that it muſt controul the blindeſt inſtincts, and moſt violent propenſities of the mind, till caſual perceptions of internal beauty, and repeated experiments of the pernicious conſequences attending vice, produce and confirm ſalutary habits. Then indeed will be the period, when virtue becomes eligible for her own ſake, and when perfect love extinguiſhes all fear.

LOUDLY have the opponents of revelation exclaimed, that the Chriſtian religion enervates the obligations of morality, by rejecting the claims of human merit, by exhibiting a full and perfect attonement for all crimes, and by denying that good works are eſſential to ſalvation. But though a Chriſtian will not admit that man can merit any thing from his Creator, he is far from denying, that there are different degrees of worth and excellence in human characters. Nor does the righteouſneſs of a Saviour imply any diſpenſation from the eternal and immutable obligations to virtue, but rather enhances their force, by ſhewing the dreadful effects of their violation, and by rendering the infinite love and grace of their divine Author more conſpicuous. Nor is the neceſſity of good works, when conſidered as means of ſalvation, denied. But to ſuppoſe them conditions, by which God is obliged to beſtow eternal life, is abſurd even to reaſon and the light of nature. For where is the inviolable contract, either tacit or expreſſed, which can bind a lawgiver to render his ſubjects happy independent of their own conduct? And ſince none can urge the claim

claim of perfect rectitude, neither can any one plead his right to felicity acquired by good works. But as the acquiſition and practice of any art are neceſſary to the accompliſhment of its end; ſo are virtuous habits and diſpoſitions neceſſary to the fruition of active, ſocial, and contemplative good. Now if the happineſs of heaven be ſuitable to the nobleſt faculties, the moſt refined and permanent affections of our nature, as at preſent conſtituted; if the torments of hell, as delineated in the Chriſtian ſcheme, be directly oppoſite and diſagreeable to them, then ſurely the cultivation of our active, rational, and ſocial powers muſt be neceſſary to capacitate them for a happineſs proper to their nature, and proportioned to their degrees of perfection. Thus, in ancient times, when public rewards were decreed for ſtrength and agility, the athletic did not obtain his garland, merely as a token of fortuitous victory, but as a public declaration, that he actually poſſeſſed thoſe qualities and acquiſitions by which the conqueſt was gained. "What ſhall we ſay then? ſhall "we continue in ſin, that grace may a-"bound? God forbid: how ſhall we that

" are dead to ſin, live any longer there-
" in? Know ye not, that ſo many of us as
" were baptized into JESUS CHRIST, were
" baptized into his death? Therefore we
" are buried with him by baptiſm into
" death: that like as CHRIST was rai-
" ſed up from the dead by the glory of the
" Father, even ſo we alſo ſhould walk in
" newneſs of life."

THAT paſſive diſpoſition, that promptitude to forgive injuries, ſo warmly recommended by JESUS, and ſo faithfully obſerved by his earlier diſciples, have been termed *puſillanimous*, if not *impracticable*. Pride and reſentment are frequently too fierce and impetuous for the deliberate counſels of prudence, or the gentle though perſuaſive dictates of religion and humanity. Nature, precipitant and vindictive in its preſent ſtate of depravity, cannot ſeparate the idea of glory from revenge, nor conceive victory, but in the miſery or extirpation of its enemies.——Theſe ſentiments however differ no leſs from true magnanimity, and genuine heroiſm, than light from darkneſs. It is an infallible and conſtant leſſon of experience,

rience, that revengeful characters only render themſelves more obvious to inſult and provocation, as they are more frequently and conſpicuouſly exerted. Senſibility to every ſlight affront, or caſual injury, conſumes the heart, and torments the ſoul with bitterneſs; it blaſts every ſocial diſpoſition, interrupts the circulation of kind offices, kindles hell in the boſom before its time, and involves its votaries in premature damnation. It is beſides juſtly interpreted as a declaration of war againſt the human ſpecies, oppreſſed with continual hoſtilities, branded with eternal and univerſal deteſtation. Cicero forbids all wrathful vindication of injuries, becauſe it is impoſſible for anger to adapt or proportion puniſhments to crimes, and ſeems to wiſh theſe corroſive paſſions never exerted in the retaliation of wrongs. But having already declared my ſentiments concerning thoſe ſalutary prohibitions of our Saviour, which reſtrain the vindictive paſſions, I ſhall only refer the reader to thoſe obſervations which he will find in a diſcourſe concerning the obligation and degrees of benevolence.

It ought not to deduce from the value, nor to diminiſh the votaries of the Chriſtian ſcheme, that its external rites are fewer, ſimpler, and more ſignificant than thoſe of any other inſtitution under heaven. But in vindication of pure and divine truths, it muſt be obſerved, that the followers of Jesus are by no means anſwerable for the groſs figments and legendary notions, which politics and ſuperſtition have introduced into faith and practice. It would be diſhoneſt and unhandſome to reproach primitive Stoiciſm with that abſurd and ridiculous apathy, ſo warmly inculcated by its modern ſectaries. Nor can we impute to Epicurus that groſs and boundleſs ſenſuality which was afterwards the darling tenet of his ſchool. Whilſt the ſoul of man, however immortal and independent in its nature, is clothed with material organs, it can only receive and communicate its ideas by ſenſible ſigns and impreſſions. The diſpoſitions of the heart, and the principles of the underſtanding, are perceived by God, without the interpoſition of any medium. Yet there are certain exertions and attitudes occaſioned in the ſoul by involuntary motion, when affect-

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ed with the conſciouſneſs of a preſence ſo auguſt and venerable, as the ſovereign Creator and univerſal Mover of things. Theſe external appearances, if expreſſive and natural, not only heighten and increaſe the ardour from whence they flow, but alſo excite ſimilar feelings in every ſuſceptible heart. Hence the origin of private and public devotion; hence the ardent gaze and elevated mein of celeſtial love; hence the dejected look and diffident air of penitence; hence the plaintive expoſtulations of tender grief, beneath the preſſure of affliction; hence the pathetic importunities of painful indigence; hence the conſcious bluſh, the diſconcerted behaviour, of ſelf-convicted guilt; and hence admiration lifts its hands and eyes to heaven, whilſt ſtarting fear, with broken accents, in ſhort and abrupt ejaculations, deprecates impending calamity. Theſe unpremeditated efforts of nature, in communicating her emotions to that ſupreme and inviſible Being on whom ſhe depends, are ſuch convincing proofs of an original propenſity to devotion, that all the ancient lawgivers conſidered divine worſhip as an eſſential part of their diſcipline.

AFTER

AETER vice and ignorance had diſguiſed the ſimple and genuine charms of religion with external trappings, then was the idolatry of Egypt imported into Greece, and there re-modelled by prieſts and poets according to the genius of the country. Numa Pompilius, authoriſed by a pretended intercourſe with Egeria goddeſs of health, whom, in the ſpirit of modern gallantry, ſhe admitted to nocturnal aſſignations, digeſted all the ſuperſtitions of Etruria into a ſyſtem; and abundantly ſupplied the Roman creed with fables, omens, and auguries, which were afterwards judiciouſly ſelected and tranſplanted into the catholic faith, for ſecular ends, by the infallible ſubſtitute of St Peter. But amongſt all the Heathen or Chriſtian mythologiſts, who eſtabliſhed arbitrary modes of faith and diſcipline, ſome dangerous extreme was always adopted. Religion was either ſo wretchedly diſfigured with apparatus and dreſs, that ſhe could no longer be known; or ſo abſolutely diveſted of all form and appearance, ſo refined and ſpiritualized, that ſhe entirely eluded the groſs apprehenſion of vulgar capacity. But the firſt of theſe errors being embraced

embraced with the greateſt avidity by popular ignorance and ſuperſtition, and moſt effectually calculated to promote the ends of carnal policy, has ever obtained the warmeſt and moſt univerſal reception. To eſcape this danger, and yet impreſs incorporated minds with a ſenſe of religion, the divine Wiſdom found it neceſſary, whilſt it rejected all unnatural and ſuperfluous forms of devotion, to retain a few ſimple and expreſſive rites, by which might be ſignified the eternal and neceſſary dependence of man upon God; his various and indiſſoluble relations to his Creator, Lawgiver, Redeemer, and Sanctifier; the degenerate ſtate of his powers, and the wonderful method of their reſtoration.

THESE conſiderations will afford us a natural and ſatisfactory account of ſuch outward obſervances as are required by the beſt and wiſeſt of all religions. Hence we are commanded, to read and underſtand the ſcriptures; to offer God the warmeſt wiſhes, and moſt exalted conceptions of the rational ſoul in praiſes; to pour forth all our hearts before him, in grateful acknowledgments of

his favours; to deprecate his wrath, and implore his mercy, in prayer; to be publicly initiated in his viſible church, by waſhing with water, in the name of the FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST; a rite ſurpriſingly emblematical of our natural depravity, as well as the neceſſity and efficacy of grace for our purification: and, laſtly, hence we are injoined to declare our acquieſcence in the atonement of JESUS CHRIST, and our adherence to his doctrines, by ſocially partaking the ſymbols of his complete and perfect ſacrifice. A full detail, and minute explication of all the practical difficulties in any religion, would be inconſiſtent with our preſent plan; we only here attempt to ſhow how impartial inquiry may be ſatisfied.

SECTION IV.

THUS far we have travelled a long journey, through paths interrupted by frightful obſtacles, and perplexed with inextricable mazes, guided with ambiguous and deſultory light, without perceiving where our wandering

wandering ſteps might find ultimate reſt. But lo! the gloom is gradually diſpelled; the whole horizon glows with a more vivid and diffuſive ſplendour; objects before but dimly ſeen, reſume their form and colour, and all the variegated ſcene of intellectual beauty and order ſhines diſplayed. Already we approach the celeſtial world; it is uncreated day! it is God himſelf, whoſe diſtant glory flaſhes on the ſoul with ſtronger and more enlivening effulgence, as ſhe emerges from guilt and ignorance, and animates her progreſs to perfection.

We have formerly propoſed the difficulties which occur in natural religion; we have conſidered the evidences that recommend the Chriſtian doctrine to our underſtandings; we have revolved the intricacies in which thoſe diſpenſations are wrapt: from whence it appears, that the myſteries contained in the goſpel are at leaſt equally intelligible, and leſs numerous, than thoſe which ariſe from the theology of unaſſiſted reaſon. It remains to ſhow, That the conſolations derived from natural religion, are not only more clearly diſcovered and au-

thenticated by revelation; but others more glorious and ſublime, which reaſon could never inveſtigate, ſhine conſpicuous in the evangelical diſpenſation.

In the times of Greece and Rome, when philoſophy ſhone in her meridian ſplendour, ſtill the inexplicable poſture of human affairs wrapt all her luſtre in baneful and portentous darkneſs. Oft had the anxious ſage beheld with ſad ſuſpence, and mute regard, the cruel inſolence, the wanton and licentious triumphs of vice. Oft had he viewed with ſilent, yet with ſorrowful aſtoniſhment, the fierce repulſes, the fatal diſcomfitures of modeſt virtue. Wounded even to the depth of his ſoul with theſe incongruous appearances, he racked his mind to find their latent cauſe, with unavailing efforts. In one place, he might obſerve the patriot's wiſdom and public zeal, vainly ſtruggling with ſelfiſhneſs and luxury, to diffuſe and eſtabliſh their ſalutary ſchemes: in another, Partiality conſtituted by general ſuffrage the ſole arbitreſs of merit, from whoſe determination there was no appeal. In one region, livid Peſtilence tinged the burning atmoſphere with

with death, inviſible Deſtruction ſtalked at large through the wide expanſe of heaven, and all the fluid element was impregnated with poiſon; nor ſtopped the dire Contagion to examine what dreadful conſequences his havock might produce, but aimed his undiſcriminating ſhafts with equal rage at guilt or innocence: in another, Ambition fired the breaſts of kings with wrath, or fanned the flames of inteſtine ſedition. Hot from burning hell, grim Diſcord iſſued forth to open day, transfuſing from boſom to boſom all the vengeance of her native abode. War, horrid War, the curſe of life, and reproach of nature, contracted his angry brow, fermented nations with his brazen voice, and flaſhed deſtruction from his rolling eyes, that never gaze with pleaſure but on blood and carnage: before him, inexorable fury and precipitant revenge; behind him, all the kindred ſentiments of nature, and all the ſocial virtues, attended with poverty, confuſion, and deſpair, pierced the vault of heaven with unavailing cries, and wept ſuch tears as flow from irreverſible diſtreſs. Here Virtue periſhed by the frown of deſpotiſm; there, led a victim to popular prejudice,

prejudice, ſhe breathed her laſt, in cruel, yet protracted torments, purſued by inſults and execrations, which ſhe neither merited nor provoked. But though language could outſtrip the career of time, and number all its moments by diſcriptions, in vain ſhould we attempt the various and complicated ills, that, like inſatiable harpies, riot on the comforts of public life.

WHEN the philoſopher explored the calm domeſtic ſcene in hopes of conſolation, how miſerably was he ſtill deceived? Alas! the little world is a mere epitome of the great. The ſeeds of miſchief and misfortune are equally diffuſed through human nature. Infidelity, or diverſity of intereſts, blaſted every conjugal endearment. Faction breathed through families her venom, that mocked the force of antidote. Here parental tenderneſs mourned the premature deſtiny of its darling offspring: there widowed worth and beauty, incumbent over the tomb of all its happineſs, deplores the eternal abſence of its deareſt good; nor feels a wiſh, but to mingle with its native duſt.

AMIDST

AMIDST the conflict of elements, the diſcord of paſſions, the colliſion of intereſts, the diſſonance of opinions, the wrecks of peace and order; where can the attentive ſage inveſtigate the hand of a beneficent providence? How does it appear that man is the care of ſuperior Beings, whilſt he becomes a prey to all the winds of heaven, to all the ſtorms that agitate the ſea, to all the forked lightnings of the ſky? Nor is he only deſtined to ſuſtain the war of elements againſt him, however unequal to the mighty conflict; the howling wood pours forth her hoſtile multitudes, and every ſanguinary inſtinct burns to deſtroy him. But winds, and ſeas, and forked lightnings, and all the ſavage monſters of the deſert, are mild and gentle enemies compared with man to man. Their violence is not directed by ill intention; they do not torture with deliberate cruelty, nor explore the means of aggravating and protracting pain; they plead no fraternal title to our confidence, that they may leave us diſarmed and open to deſtruction. Man alone refines and improves on theſe deteſtable precedents; it is his diſtinguiſhing prerogative to reſemble, and even to emulate the ſpirits

rits beneath in their own execrable province.

IMPRESSED with ſuch a ſad, yet obvious ſpectacle of nature, will not the contemplative inquirer be tempted to entertain meditations like theſe:

" FROM what ſource do I derive this con-
" ſcious being? Who was it that placed me
" in my preſent circumſtances? For what
" end have I been produced? I find myſelf
" no indifferent ſpectator of nature. There
" are ſome ſtates and objects towards which
" I tend with indefatigable propenſity, as to
" my ſupreme good; and others, from which
" I fly with inextinguiſhable averſion, as
" from ultimate evil. It is indeed certain,
" that I can only feel pain or pleaſure from my
" own perceptions and ideas. But from this
" it will not follow, that happineſs or miſery
" are always in my power. For ſuch is the
" connexion eſtabliſhed by nature between
" my own exiſtence and the objects which
" ſurround it, that ſome by their preſence
" neceſſarily excite pleaſing, and others
" painful ſenſations. Theſe become ſources

of

" of deſire or abhorrence according to their
" nature; and as the mind is variouſly af-
" fected by either of theſe ſituations, the
" ſtate in which ſhe then perceives herſelf
" likewiſe becomes either a ſubject of choice
" or rejection. It is not ſufficient to ſay,
" that a number of theſe connexions, by
" which objects give me pain or pleaſure,
" may be artificial, and owe their being to
" wrong aſſociations of ideas, to falſe opi-
" nions, or to ſome other accidental cauſe.
" Still it muſt be allowed, that the greateſt
" number of agreeable or diſagreeable ſenſa-
" tions, are founded in the real nature of
" things. Nay even the artificial, or, if
" you pleaſe, the arbitrary ſources of de-
" light and miſery, of which you ſpeak, are
" not without their cauſes, which, though
" mutable in themſelves, and inconſtant in
" their effects, are yet neceſſary in their in-
" fluence and operations on my mind, till
" their force be counteracted or deſtroyed
" by ſome ſuperior efficient. I know that
" corporeal impreſſions vary in their degree
" of poignancy, according to the different
" ſtates and habits of my organs; but from
" this it will by no means be concluſive,

" that they are either capable of change or
" annihilation. Experience convinces me,
" that, in myſelf, through all their moſt
" extravagant varieties, they are fixed and
" uniform. The intention of nature in
" producing active beings, is an irrefraga-
" ble argument, that ſhe likewiſe deſigned
" them to exert the powers of choice. And
" what is choice, but the ultimate determi-
" nation of my conſcious and deliberative
" faculties towards ſuch things as are, or
" ſeem agreeable? Since then I am a part
" of a more extenſive ſyſtem, and by this
" union ultimately concerned in its order
" and welfare; can I poſſibly ſurvey its re-
" volutions with inſenſibility?

" It is plain, that I myſelf, and every
" thing around me, have relations and ten-
" dencies beyond our own exiſtence; and
" do not terminate in ourſelves, but in that
" whole of which we are parts. It is like-
" wiſe clear from intuitive and conſtant per-
" ception, that there is ſomething in me
" which diſtinguiſhes me from every other
" being, and conſtitutes me what I am. Nor
" can I forbear to reaſon by analogy from
" myſelf

" myſelf to every thing elſe around me, and
" conclude, that as they are likewiſe indi-
" viduals, there muſt be ſome eſſential cauſe
" of their diſtinction. Can therefore parti-
" cular beings have their conſtituent princi-
" ples, whilſt the whole ſyſtem from which
" they flow, and in which they terminate,
" has none at all? Is there no univerſal
" Genius, no ſacred Superintendant of na-
" ture, whoſe care and delight is to ſuſtain,
" to nouriſh, to preſerve her ample frame?

" AGAIN: I feel that the principle, what-
" ever it is, by which I am preſerved and
" animated, is neceſſarily determined to
" promote the good and order of that ſubor-
" dinate ſyſtem over which it preſides; and
" though obnoxious to error and miſtake,
" yet never can be the deſigning or voluntа-
" ry cauſe of its own evil. Muſt I not then,
" by parity of reaſon, transfer the ſame im-
" mutable principle of action to that Being,
" whoſe energy ſuſtains and actuates, whoſe
" preſence pervades and circumſcribes,
" whoſe wiſdom informs and regulates the
" whole? If ſo, then as, in the human in-
" dividual ſyſtem, there is a communica-

" tion or intelligence from every part to the
" whole, and reciprocally from the whole to
" its parts; thus, in the great and univer-
" ſal frame, it is natural to ſuppoſe that,
" from the ſame common intereſt, the ſame
" internal perceptions, the ſame inviolable
" ſympathy, an intercourſe of the ſame
" kind, ſhould reſult.

" TELL me then, thou almighty Artifi-
" cer, and wiſe Superintendant of the ſpa-
" cious all! whence thoſe irreconcileable
" appearances, that rapid ſucceſſion of vicif-
" ſitudes, thoſe eternal hoſtilities in nature?
" Thou haſt formed us with deſires and ca-
" pacities of pleaſure from things extrinſic
" to our being; thou haſt alſo expanded
" ſources whence we may derive it. But
" why are not theſe treaſures equally acceſ-
" ſible to all thy intelligent offspring? Why
" are ſome overwhelmed by their intempe-
" rate effuſion; whilſt others, denied that
" happy exuberance, can neither force, nor
" importune one dear ineſtimable drop for
" the refreſhment of laſſitude and affliction?
" why are they ſo uncertain in their ebbs
" and flows, that he who at this moment
" imbibes

" imbibes the full collected ſtream, may be
" deſtined the next to pant and burn with
" inextinguiſhable thirſt? Why ſhould they
" fly from the lips of unaſſuming merit,
" whilſt hardy and ſucceſsful vice, inebri-
" ated with their ſwelling current, drinks e-
" ven to dull ſatiety?

" If it be true, as ſome wiſe men have
" taught, that theſe inferior attachments
" are beneath the ſublime deſtiny of our
" nature; if we are formed by thy divine
" hand to draw from living and perennial
" fountains eternal draughts of intellectual
" good; why are not thoſe nobler and more
" extenſive capacities ſooner gratified? This
" might exalt the ſoul above her preſent
" aims, extinguiſh every groſs deſire, and
" raiſe her wiſhes from ſuch fruitions as
" contaminate her powers, to objects refined
" as her nature, permanent as her exiſt-
" ence, diffuſive as her conceptions, and
" adequate to her demands.

" We are thought progreſſive beings, to
" be trained for happineſs by the diſcipline
" of proſperous or adverſe occurrences. If

" then

" then the univerſe be but one vaſt acade-
" my, for the perfection of its intelligent
" offſpring, why are they ſo long confined
" in the rank of exoterics? why are they
" not for ever conducted by their ſmiling
" tutreſs, Pleaſure, whoſe impulſes might
" be ſufficiently ſtrong to diſſipate all their
" miſtakes, and conquer all their reſiſtance,
" without the harſh reſtraint, the ſmarting
" correction of her ſtern and inflexible bro-
" ther, Pain?

" AMIDST thoſe frightful inequalities,
" thoſe inſolvable alternatives of good and
" evil, how ſhall reaſon labour to penetrate
" the gloom that involves it, and trace,
" through all the paths of nature, that uni-
" verſal idea of beauty, order, and good,
" which ought to be the great, the original
" prototype of all her works? This philo-
" ſophical anxiety for the fate of things,
" might, in ſome meaſure, be conſoled, if,
" inſtead of faint preſages and inconcluſive
" arguments, we were bleſſed with the cer-
" tain conviction of immortal exiſtence. It
" is indeed allowed, that conſciouſneſs, life,
" and motion, ſeem unaccountable from all

" the

" the known principles of mechaniſm; nor
" is it improbable that qualities ſo inherent
" in their ſubject, may exiſt in ſome indivi-
" ſible eſſence. The progreſſive nature of
" the mind, whoſe capacities for ever en-
" large, and whoſe improvements are capa-
" ble of advancing without end, may doubt-
" leſs inſpire the moſt agreeable anticipa-
" tions. But whilſt I feel this living, mo-
" ving, voluntary principle within me paſſive
" to every external impreſſion; whilſt expe-
" rience convinces me, that her moſt eſſen-
" tial powers and important operations may
" be ſuſpended, and even appear annihila-
" ted; how can I aſcertain that independ-
" ence which ſeems to be the neceſſary pre-
" rogative of immortality?—Alas! how
" ſhort, how evaneſcent, how replete with
" evils is human life! To-day, we exiſt, we
" feel, we agitate ourſelves and all around
" us; to-morrow, we are extinct, and ſilent
" as the vaſt abyſs, before the potent and
" omnific word called nature to being, if
" there ever was a time when things began
" to be.

ALMIGHTY

" ALMIGHTY Mind! eternal Sovereign of
" the univerſe! whoſe intelligence I partici-
" pate, by whoſe power I am ſuſtained,
" whoſe exiſtence and attributes I inveſti-
" gate, whoſe impulſes I ſeem to feel inceſ-
" ſantly prompting all my active powers to
" exert themſelves for univerſal good; to
" what ſacred light, what unexplored ſource,
" ſhall I fly for information? How ſhall I
" diſſipate the gloomy uncertainty, whoſe
" incumbent horror depreſſes all my being,
" and leaves its brighteſt hopes, its nobleſt
" enterpriſes abſorbed in endleſs and infinite
" deſpair? In vain am I told that, upon the
" mixture of the human character, depend
" the varieties of its fortune. Miſery is in-
" deed the native conſequence of vice; but
" why ſhould vice take place in human na-
" ture? That error and miſtake are the re-
" ſult of limited powers, I can eaſily grant;
" but will it follow from thence, that unin-
" terrupted peace and tranquillity are incom-
" patible with finite exiſtence? Is there no
" ſuppoſable ſtate, in which a mind,
" though circumſcribed in its powers, and
" confined to a particular ſphere of action,
" may be free from miſery?

" GOD

" God of nature! to whoſe eyes the
" depth of eternal wiſdom, the numberleſs
" viciſſitudes of infinite poſſibility are ob-
" vious! why am I, and all the fraternal race
" of men, born to the wretched inheritance
" of inexpiable guilt and immoveable wo?
" As images reflected by the poliſhed ſur-
" face of an opaque body, vaniſh in ſwift
" ſucceſſion, without impreſſing any mark
" of their exiſtence, and leave the open ex-
" panſe unoccupied for others; ſo ſwiftly
" paſs the fluctuating race of men, but not
" unheard nor unobſerved. Departed vir-
" tue forſakes its friends and allies robbed
" of half themſelves, diſſolved in tears and
" anguiſh; whilſt expiring guilt entails on
" its connexions the deteſtable heritage of
" ſhame and execration.

" Father of the human ſpirit! amidſt
" this general confuſion of things, in which
" the beams of thy gracious countenance al-
" ternately ſink in impenetrable darkneſs, or
" emerge in celeſtial glory to mortal eyes;
" ſtill, ſtill my ſoul perſuades me, not only
" of thy exiſtence, but of its infinite and in-
" ſeparable perfections. For whence this

" ſpark of reaſon, but from thee? What is
" every ſenſe of order and beauty, but pro-
" penſities which find their objects finiſhed
" in thy glorious nature? Who but thou
" couldſt kindle and expand that reſtleſs wiſh
" which glows for univerſal felicity? Is
" then my ſoul intereſted in the happineſs
" of all conſcious and rational beings, and
" can I think her divine Author leſs generous,
" leſs benevolent, than ſhe? Such are my
" views whilſt every tempeſt in the natural
" or moral world ſubſides: But when vice,
" perturbation, or deformity, reſume their
" province; once more my mind relapſes in-
" to anxious doubt; again my fruitleſs ex-
" poſtulations riſe to heaven."

THESE are certainly the natural feelings, theſe the fluxes and refluxes of a philoſophic ſpirit, unenlightened by the kind acceſſion of evangelical truth. Let us then ſolicit comfort from her genuine abode, even the boſom of the Deity, propitiated to man by the merits and interceſſion of a dying Saviour.

IT

IT ſufficiently appears from that melancholy ſuſpenſe between hope and deſpair, in which we have found the diſquiſitions of human wiſdom involved, that the exiſtence of natural and moral evil is the ſole, the eſſential cauſe of heſitation concerning the being and attributes of God, or the origin and end of human nature. Nor was it poſſible for reaſon to detect the latent connexion between the vices of men, and the diſorders of the material world.

EXPERIENCE indeed had ſhown, that luxury is the parent of diſeaſe; but, except this, the puniſhment of vice, ſeemed limited to the remorſe which it inſpired, and the reward of virtue to the internal ſatisfaction which it produced. For though reaſon was willing to ſuppoſe that rapid lightnings, impetuous tempeſts, and all the vindictive exertions of nature were inſtruments of divine juſtice for the chaſtiſement of enormous guilt; yet this concluſion, however natural, was not ratified by obſervation and experience, becauſe innocence and virtue proved as frequently the victims of external accident as vice: nor were all theſe perſons equally cri-

minal upon whom the tower of Siloam fell. Thus all the inward diſorders, and all the external cataſtrophes to which human nature was ſubjected, appeared entirely inexplicable; nor could ſages agree, from what origin they were deduced, or to what purpoſes they were applied.

PHILOSOPHY had indeed perceived a ſtriking and evident difference between mind and matter. The latter was found entirely paſſive, and blindly actuated by impulſe or attraction alone; the former moved by intrinſic energy, which could only be impelled or ſuſpended by the interpoſition of moral or rational motives. Hence the idea of a free and voluntary agent, whoſe natural powers, uncircumſcribed by outward reſtraints, left them, though not equally indifferent in their choice, yet equally capacious of good or evil. Upon this conſtitution, it appeared obvious, that all moral government muſt be founded. Nor was any violation of this liberty of choice compatible even with the eſſence of an accountable being. That free agents therefore, in ſome caſes, might abuſe their liberty, was a natu-

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ral ſuppoſition: but, from this poſſibility, it could never be preſumed, that moral evil would univerſally prevail; much leſs, that external pain and miſery, under the adminiſtration of a wiſe and good providence, would be the undiſtinguiſhed portion of all.

By revelation, however, we are taught, that the abuſe of free and unconſtrained choice was the ſource of evil. And as the whole human race was then united in two repreſentatives, who rationally accepted the terms of happineſs propoſed by their Creator; ſo their violation of that original covenant not only polluted and diſarranged the conſtituent principles of their nature, but impreſſed the ſame hereditary ſtains on all their deſcendents, and ſubjected the whole progeny to thoſe penalties which had been incurred by its firſt propagators. In conſequence of this dreadful change, the Almighty Power, which had formerly eſtabliſhed ſacred order and harmony amongſt the external elements, now, in ſome meaſure, impreſſed a permanent curſe upon nature, that the effects of her diſcord might aid the internal ſanctions of vice and virtue. For as the

the empire of vice was now univerſal; ſo it became neceſſary that the ſphere of puniſhment ſhould be no leſs extenſive. And though the influence of general laws, which, in every regular œconomy, muſt take place, might, in many particular caſes, diſproportion the degrees of vice and miſery; yet the ſufferings inflicted upon each delinquent, by turning his reflections upon himſelf, and upon that inward rectitude which alone could render being ſupportable, had a native tendency to his reformation. Thus the divine Spirit vindicates the ways of God to man. Thus we learn, that natural evil, far from being unneceſſarily or wantonly inflicted, is a ſalubrious medicine for the diſorders of the ſoul. —Theſe conſolatory views of God and nature ought to be ſtill more highly eſteemed, as they are not confined to the learned receſs, nor diſcovered by long and abſtract reſearches, but intelligible to every thinking being, and ſupported by ſuch evidences as are within the reach of popular apprehenſion.

THE

THE ancient philoſophers did not labour ſo much to diſcover the final, as the original cauſe of evil; for if they could determine whence it flowed, that diſcovery would conſiderably enlighten their opinions concerning its tendency. Through this labyrinth revelation conducts our inquiry with ſucceſs never before attained; for it inſtructs us whence both natural and moral evil deduce their being and influence, in what manner they are connected one with another, and how the firſt becomes a happy inſtrument in correcting the laſt. If, then, you demand of a Chriſtian, whence moral depravity? he will not heſitate to derive it from the perverſion of freedom. If you aſk him, whence pain and every natural diſtreſs or calamity? he will anſwer, that they are the reſult of divine appointment, as bitter potions to redreſs the diſorders of the moral conſtitution.

CLEANTHES indeed, and others of the Stoics, had maintained the connexion between natural and moral evil. "Thou "bringeſt order out of confuſion, (ſays that "poetical philoſopher, in his hymn to the "ſupreme

" ſupreme Deity); and ſuch things as are " diſagreeable in themſelves, become agree- " able under thy adminiſtration." For though they deny the exiſtence of evil, it is one of their favourite tenets, that the ſiniſter events of external nature are deſigned to cure and rectify moral diſorders. Their manner of reaſoning upon both theſe topics may be ſeen in Simplicius's commentary upon Epictetus. According to him, the greateſt of natural evils is diſſolution, which only reſtores things to their primitive ſtate, and can therefore be no real evil: for as that portion of earth which compoſes our bodies, was inſenſible to all misfortunes before it aſſumed that form; ſo when reſolved into its original duſt, it is no longer capable of diſagreeable feelings, and conſequently no longer capacious of evil.

THE efficacy, however, of theſe arguments will not be ſenſibly felt by one who groans in excruciating anguiſh. Men may change the names of things, but their natures remain ſtubborn and inflexible. Pain will be the eternal antipathy of a ſenſative being, notwithſtanding the gentle appellations it may

may obtain from ſpeculative men, when reſolved to extort a particular concluſion, which reaſon and experience confront with all their force. We may perhaps be induced to ſuffer miſery by the proſpect of its agreeable conſequences. Theſe may balance, but not annihilate, the diſtreſs which precedes them. Painful or pleaſing viciſſitudes may give us a more exquiſite reliſh for their contraries; but neither of theſe can be a proper apology for the exiſtence and prevalence of evil, much leſs can they deſtroy its eſſence, or change it into good. For ſtill the inſolvable queſtion occurs, why is the courſe of things ſo determined, that good may be in any degree the effect of evil? why are we ſo conſtituted, that our ſenſe of the one muſt be heightened by impreſſions of the other? If adverſity be the miniſter of Heaven for the correction of vice, why is not guilt the ſole aim of his envenomed ſhafts? why are they ſhot with equal rage at innocence and virtue? In a word, it is the Chriſtian ſcheme alone which can reconcile phenomena ſo heterogeneous in themſelves, ſo eternally and eſſentially oppoſite one to another, as good and

evil, in the plan of a wiſe and benevolent adminiſtration.

But though we ſhould grant, what the unenlightened ſage gratuitouſly ſuppoſes, that natural evil is a courſe of chaſtiſement for vice; yet let it be remembered, that moral evil is, in ſome meaſure, eternal and boundleſs in its conſequences: for the actions of intellectual beings are no leſs neceſſarily connected by providence, than phyſical cauſes and effects. Thus an inſult as neceſſarily provokes retaliation, as heat and moiſture facilitate the growth of vegetables. Herbs may be prematurely nipped with froſt, or blaſted with lightening; reſentment of injuries may be checked by conſcious impotence, or impending danger; but the effects of both are equally certain and determined, when no ſuperior cauſe interpoſes. Nor is vegetation a more natural product of warmth and humidity, than vengeance of hurt and injury. Thus moral evil has a native tendency to propagate and diffuſe itſelf without end, and without limits. Nor is the ſame concluſion leſs obvious from its contagious and exemplary nature. One malevo-

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lent action not only produces another of the ſame kind; but the malignity ſpreads from heart to heart, and the ſpectator becomes too quickly enamoured of the miſchiefs which he beholds, nor heſitates to mingle in the ſcene of horror. Thus neither from the human character in general, nor from the nature of the thing itſelf, can any bounds be aſſigned to its progreſs and duration.

THOUGH the beneficent adminiſtration of providence has, with admirable wiſdom and benignity, ſuſpended the career, and circumſcribed the influence of evil; though its native propenſity to extend and perpetuate its own empire is controuled by ſuperior cauſes, and diverted from its original aim, to produce effects of a quite oppoſite nature; yet theſe conſequences are neither deducible from the intention of the primitive agent, nor from the nature of the actions he performs, but from the happy and ſucceſsful interpoſitions of a mightier Power, whoſe efforts are directed by conſummate wiſdom, and animated by infinite goodneſs. If therefore the native influence of evil be indefinite,

both in its progreſs and duration, it can be checked by no poſitive law, whoſe ſanctions are not equal to all the dangers that can poſſibly ariſe from impunity. Thus we ſee, that the ſpirit of the divine laws, which promiſe eternal happineſs to their obſervers, or threaten delinquents with endleſs miſery, is inſpired by the ſtricteſt equity, and conſiſtent with the moſt tender mercy. Whatever motives may produce or regulate the procedure of individuals, we know that public tranſactions muſt be inſpired and determined by public cauſes; ſo that, in the divine government, poſitive laws, armed and ſupported with external ſanctions, are abſolutely neceſſary. Theſe rewards and forfeitures muſt by no means be arbitrary either in their extent or continuance, nor ought therefore to be debilitated by partial application; for theſe unhappy imperfections conſiderably fruſtrate the deſign of all human inſtitutions, render their ſucceſs doubtful, and prove the moſt fruitful ſources of iniquity.

WITHOUT an adequate atonement, therefore, no ſinner can poſſible eſcape the hands, or

or elude the awards of juſtice. But ſuch a compenſation can by no means be given, if the delinquent's capacities of ſuffering be limited, or his ſtation and character of no higher importance than thoſe of his brethren; for the malignity of moral evil is too diffuſe and permanent to be cured by any exemplary puniſhment, whoſe duration and extent are circumſcribed. Even penitence itſelf cannot obliterate the evils which it deplores. Tranſgreſſions already paſt, and recorded in the books of heaven and fate, are not to be reverſed by reſolutions of future reformation. The pureſt virtue of which human nature is capable, extends not to the ſanctity of thoſe laws which are preſcribed for its obedience. Our beſt actions demand the exertion of mercy and forgiveneſs; how then can we atone for ſuch as are bad? Thus it appears, (as in another diſcourſe we have more fully attempted to prove), that without an expreſs and poſitive revelation from heaven, ſinners have no reaſon to expect pardon.

It may therefore only be added on this ſubject, that if the laws of eternal and univerſal

verſal government demand a ſanction adequate to their own importance and dignity; if the nature of moral evil be to extend its influence, and protract its duration; if the continuance of the human ſoul be immortal, and its poſſibility of ſuffering be indefinite, ſurely no conſolation can be more important or more welcome to a deſpairing criminal, than overtures of pardon and reconciliation. But for theſe we are indebted to Chriſtianity alone; nor has reaſon the ſmalleſt authority, either from analogy, or the nature of things, to conclude, that God will be propitious to the guilty, unleſs her informations be derived from his own mouth.

THE powers of perception, of ſpontaneous motion, of conſcience, and reflection; the progreſſive nature of the ſoul; the inextinguiſhable deſire of exiſtence, and horror of annihilation; the unequal diſtribution of good and evil in this œconomy of things; are indeed preſumptive arguments for immortality, ſufficient to inſpire us with the moſt delightful hopes, and to influence our courſe of action. But theſe preſages, however flattering and perſuaſive to the mind, are

are far from producing that acquieſcence, that ſerene ſatisfaction, which reſults from demonſtrative proof. In the converſation of Socrates with his friends, immediately before he drank the poiſoned bowl, though he urges all the arguments which we have now recapitulated, and others leſs cogent, he frequently diſcovers a ſenſible heſitation, and tells his diſciples, that, if the proofs which he then offered ſhould appear inconcluſive, it would be neceſſary to explore others more valid and ſatisfactory. Cicero, in his Tuſculan queſtions, *De contemptu mortis*, though he endeavours, with all the force of his genius, to aſſert the doctrine of immortality, yet declares himſelf its votary rather from the pleaſure of its proſpect, than the conviction of its arguments. In the firſt ſection of this treatiſe, we have endeavoured to ſhew, that the arguments ariſing from perception, from intrinſic motion, and from the operations of the mind, are too weak to bear the weight of a ſuperſtructure ſo immenſe as human immortality: and whatever conjectures may be derived from the ſuperior nature and diſtinguiſhing faculties of the ſoul; yet perhaps they are not altogether

equal

equal to the force of this general axiom, "That all things which have had a beginning, may likewiſe have an end; and that "generation implies corruption." Even the Stoics, who taught that the ſouls of men were τὰ ἀπόσπασματα, or parts ſeparated from the divine eſſence, did not think them immortal; for which they are ingeniouſly ridiculed by Cicero, who tells them, That "ſince they allowed the mind to ſurvive the "body, it was no mighty ſacrifice to compliment it with a longer duration than "the life of a crow." Many of the primitive fathers in the church explicitly maintained the natural mortality of the ſoul, which, according to them, was only exempt from diſſolution by baptiſm. And though perhaps ſome confuſed notions of its future exiſtence might be implied in the funeral rites and deifications of early ages; yet before Fericides the Syrian, and Pythagoras of Samos, the eternal exiſtence of the ſoul was not admitted as a topic in philoſophy. Thus from the nature of things, and the ſentiments of men, it appears, that all the indications of human immortality were dark and ambiguous. With what joy therefore ought

ought we to receive the happy tidings, that "God is not the God of the dead, but of "the living;" and that JESUS, when he died, only went "to prepare a place for us, "that where he is, there we might be "alſo."

IN all religions, and in every period of life, it was a general principle, that the wiſhes of men ſincerely offered to the throne of God, if they were ſuch as became rational creatures to indulge, or the ſupreme Diſpoſer of nature to hear, aſcended grateful to the ſkies, and found acceptance in the ear of Mercy. But it would perhaps be no eaſy matter to account for the univerſal eſtabliſhment of this opinion. For when we contemplate the character of God as an eternal and immutable Intelligence, it muſt appear, that he acts upon principles agreeable to his nature, and that the plan of his adminiſtration is like himſelf, eternal, immutable, and uniform. Whatever therefore is conducive to the great ends of providence, will certainly happen unſolicited; and, on the contrary, whatever tends to retard or fruſtrate its purpoſes, can never be accompliſhed,

though implored with all the importunities of heaven and earth. Nor does the courſe of nature preſent any ſolution for theſe difficulties. The laws of her operation are not adapted to particular exigencies, but general in their ends, and univerſal in their influence. Gravitation, and all the mechanical powers of nature, admit no ſuſpence, but from the interpoſitions of that Power by whom theſe biaſſes were originally impreſſed on her frame. Such interpoſitions however appear improbable in themſelves, and have accordingly been ſeldom or never obſerved: for if infinite wiſdom hath eſtabliſhed general laws, they are certainly calculated to accompliſh all the ends which the ſovereign Intellect propoſed; ſo that any exertion to ſuſpend or retard their courſe would be ſubverſive of their original intention, and contrary to the ſpirit of the divine government. Nor can we imagine that God will, at any period, counteract himſelf, or reverſe with one hand what he has produced with the other. The tenor of human affairs perpetually ſuggeſts the ſame irreſiſtible concluſion. The fixed and invariable relation between cauſe and effect is not to be

be ſeparated by any accidental emergence of individual creatures, nor by any deſires which they may breathe to Heaven, inſpired by theſe peculiar ſituations. Beſides, the wiſhes of men are as incompatible as their intereſts; and the gratification of one, is the neceſſary diſappointment of another. Two armies in the field of battle will doubtleſs pray with equal ardour for deciſive victory; but how can this be granted to both? Deeply impreſſed with the inviolable order of nature, and the intricacy of human affairs, the Athenian ſage injoined his pupil not to be too minute and particular in his petitions to Heaven, but confine his wiſhes to what was really good, and implicitly reſign all other events to the wiſe and gracious determination of ſuperior Intelligence.

FROM theſe views of the material world and the courſe of providence, though it may appear that the welfare and happineſs of the whole is conſulted, yet the weight and duration of particular calamities may ſtill be dreadful. Man is often too weak to redreſs, and oftener too inſenſible to feel, the ſuffer-

ings of his fellow-creatures. Where then ſhall afflicted virtue and innocence explore a remedy for their diſtreſſes, if God and nature be deaf to the effuſions of their ſorrow? And yet, from all the concluſions of reaſon, what happier preſages can they deduce? But he who, from eternity, knew the ſecret counſels of the divine boſom, gives us a very different account of things, and, with all the ſpirit of his Father's benignity, commands us "to aſk, and we ſhall receive; to ſeek, "and we ſhall find; to knock, and it ſhall "be opened unto us." How grateful to the human ſoul is that ſacred promiſe, that "whatſoever we ſhall requeſt in his name, "he will give us, that the Father may be "glorified in the Son?" For if that inſenſible judge, who was neither actuated by fear of God nor man, had ſo much regard for his own quiet, as to gratify the inceſſant importunities of a ſuppliant widow, how much more will God, who is prompted by eternal and inherent goodneſs, liſten to the juſt and natural deſires of his people? Earthly parents, when their children aſk bread, do not tantalize them with a ſtone; nor, when they crave a fiſh, mock their wiſhes with a ſerpent;

ſerpent; nor, when an egg is neceſſary, inſult the demands of nature with a ſcorpion. Do we therefore, inſpired by the faithful inſtincts of nature, know to give good things to our offspring; and ſhall the original Source of wiſdom, beneficence, and happineſs, be inexorable to the intreaties of his children? See *An attempt to ſolve the objections againſt prayer*, in a diſcourſe from Phillip. iv. 6.

THOSE limits which neceſſarily circumſcribed the human being in its moſt exalted ſtate, ſtill left it infinitely beneath the incomprehenſible glory and dignity of its ſupreme Creator. But when the ſtains of guilt were added to its native imperfection, with what ſucceſs could it hope to interpoſe in its own favour with the offended Sovereign of heaven and earth? To reunite theſe diſtant extremes, it was abſolutely requiſite that ſome perſon ſhould be found, who, participating both the divine and human nature, might be qualified to repreſent the one, and render the other acceſſible. Hence, in the perſon of man, all the demands of God's law were ſatisfied, all the crimes of human nature atoned, and all the pernicious conſequences of

of its apoſtacy removed. Nor are we alone purified from guilt by that "blood of "ſprinkling, which cleanſeth from all ſin;" but have likewiſe an Advocate with the Father, whoſe unwearied and efficacious interceſſion aſſiduouſly importunes his goodneſs to forgive our iniquities, to ſanctify our natures, to promote our happineſs, and to ſave our ſouls. As this glorious Perſon is inveſted with the adminiſtration of human affairs, he is fully impowered to make all the incidents of providence, all the outward means and internal operations of grace, effectual inſtruments of our preſent improvement and future happineſs; ſo fruitful of ſubſtantial comfort is the word of God delivered by JESUS CHRIST.

EXPERIENCE will demonſtrate, how ignorant we are of our duty, and how reluctant to perform it when diſcovered. The convictions of reaſon are too cool and unintereſting, to impreſs the mind with ſteady principles of action. Even precepts and injunctions, however authoriſed, have no force ſufficient to command our obedience, to enlighten the darkneſs of our underſtandings,

to

to controul the perverſity of our inclinations, to rouſe and ſtimulate our conſciences. All the leſſons of experience, and all the means of human inſtruction, are frequently impotent. It were therefore greatly to be wiſhed, that the goodneſs of God would interpoſe for our relief upon ſuch occaſions, to diſſipate the ſhades of ignorance, to quench the flames of impetuous appetite, to excite and animate our progreſs in virtue, and to deter us from vice, by proper views of its native deformity and dreadful conſequences. Hence, in the remoteſt climes and moſt barbarous ages, a notion of intuitive communication with Heaven univerſally prevailed. But the ſtrange ceremonies by which theſe divine emanations were ſought, the legendary facts which ſupported their credit, the various and inconſiſtent opinions which were propogated by their pretended authority, and, above all, the abſurd and immoral lives of thoſe who boaſted of ſuch extraordinary gifts, were more than ſufficient to refute the confidence with which they were entertained. One nation alone, confined in a diſtant corner of the world, unknown to the reſt of mankind, or deſpiſed by them, could

produce

produce ſuch credentials as were proper to eſtabliſh a principle ſo generally believed, and ſo weakly ſupported every where elſe. Dejected therefore with ſuch gloomy reflections, as the abſence of the Deity from the human mind muſt naturally inſpire, how could the pious heart, involved in any dilemma of conduct, or oppreſſed with unforeſeen calamity, forbear to exclaim in anguiſh, "My God, my "God! why haſt thou forſaken me?"

AMIDST the horrors of intellectual darkneſs and moral depravity, which ſeemed to extend their baneful and portentous ſhade over all the viſible works of the Creator, how comfortable and welcome muſt it have been to every ſoul that was conſcious of its weakneſs, and tenacious of its duty, to learn, that the interceſſion of JESUS would be employed in procuring from the Father another PARACLETE, whoſe intimate preſence ſhould irradiate the minds, inſpire the tongues, and regulate the conduct of all who ſincerely implored his aſſiſtance? By this divine Παρουσία this *heavenly Preſence*, the mind is enlightened and animated in its progreſs, conſoled and ſupported in its afflictions, informed

and

and determined in its difficulties. And though the ſilent, yet emphatic intimations of this internal monitor, are now of a more private and limited nature; though they do not, as in ages paſt, tranſport the ſoul in viſions of futurity, but co-operate with the natural powers of man, in a way more agreeable to themſelves; ſtill however the Chriſtian may feel and bleſs their ſacred influence; ſtill he may hear the gentle, yet intelligible, whiſpers of celeſtial wiſdom, transfuſing courage through his heart in every danger, illuminating his underſtanding in every doubt, and ſuppreſſing the agitations of his ſpirit in every adverſe occurrence. Numerous and ſublime are the panegyrics which philoſophy beſtows on the mind of man; but that the living God himſelf ſhould prefer the human boſom, when pure and holy, to every other temple, was a diſcovery reſerved for him, "who ſpake as never man ſpake."

AMONGST all the religions dictated by nature, which admitted the doctrine of immortality, none ſeems to have aſſigned the ſoul ſuch taſks, nor promiſed ſuch enjoyments, as were ſuitable to the extent of her capacity, e-

qual to the dignity of her powers, and adapted to the purity of her eſſence. The heathen Elyſium was capricious and fanciful; the Mahometan paradiſe, groſs and ſenſative. The claims of unaſſiſted reaſon to future happineſs are extremely modeſt and humble. All the heaven which the mere philoſopher can, with any degree of probability, anticipate, is the free and natural uſe of his ſocial and rational powers exempted from pain and uneaſineſs. But how far does this idea ſink beneath the glory and happineſs which Chriſtianity promiſes its votaries in the world to come? If beyond the preſent life we look for ſocial felicity, where can a nobler ſociety be found, than "the general aſſembly and church of the "firſt-born which are written in heaven; an "innumerable company of angels; the ſpi-"rits of juſt men made perfect; JESUS the "mediator of the new covenant, and God "the judge of all!" If we are enamoured of rational enjoyments, what entertainment can be more ſublime, than to contemplate intelligence and truth in their original fountain, to ſtudy the plan in which they operate, and to admire the various forms which they

they aſſume! If eternal and abſolute immunity from pain, ſorrow, danger, and death, delight us; what proſpect can be more agreeable to thoſe who navigate their way through the various tempeſts of this tumultuous and fluctuating life, than the harbour of profound and endleſs repoſe, which Chriſtianity propoſes to our hopes! In this conſummation of rational exiſtence and beatitude, every deſire of the ſoul ſhall be ſatisfied to its full extent, and every faculty exerted in its utmoſt perfection; whilſt, in everlaſting progreſs, the human being riſes to more diſtinguiſhed heights of improvement and happineſs.—But in vain ſhould we attempt to deſcribe things which are unutterable and incomprehenſible. The height, the depth, the length, and breadth of theſe immenſe poſſeſſions, are only known to that infinite Liberality who beſtowed them.

WHEN the beneficent purpoſes of virtue are fruſtrated by oppreſſive injuſtice, when detraction endeavours to involve her amiable luſtre in darkneſs, ſhe naturally anticipates a period, when her efforts will prove more ſucceſsful, and her reputation be freed from

the malignity of unjuſt cenſure. But theſe agreeable preſages are rather the effect of our wiſhes, than of our concluſions; as they are neither ſupported by any induction of reaſon, nor favoured by any analogy in the courſe of things. The few inſtances in which merit is properly rewarded, or vindictive juſtice aſſerts its authority, too rarely occur, and are of too little importance to remove all difficulties, and firmly eſtabliſh the principle of univerſal retribution. So various are the ſucceſſes of vice and virtue both in public and private life, ſo different from their natural tendencies are the iſſues of actions, ſo precarious is the tenor of human events, that reaſon has no fixed, no invariable *data*, from whence to deduce the reſtoration of univerſal order and harmony in the works of God. For if, in any period of the divine government, virtue be depreſſed, and vice triumphant, why may not other periods, and other inſtances, produce the ſame unhappy cataſtrophes? or what grounds has the diſappointed inquirer to imagine, that any future circumrotation of things ſhall place them in a better or happier ſtate? It is therefore from the word of God alone

that

that we can derive ultimate ſatisfaction in theſe intricate reſearches. Hence only we can be informed with certainty, that there is an important æra to come, when the righteous Judge of all the earth will render to every man according to his deeds; "to them who "by patient continuance in well-doing, ſeek "for glory, honour, and immortality, eter- "nal life: but unto them that are conten- "tious, and do not obey the truth, but obey "unrighteouſneſs: indignation, and wrath; "tribulation and anguiſh upon every ſoul "of man that doth evil, of the Jew firſt, "and alſo of the Gentile. But glory, ho- "nour, and peace, to every man that work- "eth good, to the Jew firſt, and alſo to the "Gentile. For there is no reſpect of perſons "with God."

THUS, according to our primary intention, we have attempted to prove, that the conſolations derived from natural theology are confirmed by revealed religion; and that the doctrines of JESUS have opened other ſources of comfort, which philoſophy could never explore. It remains that we conclude with

with a few natural and obvious improvements from the whole *.

SECTION

* SINCE the plan of this work was laid, and in a great meaſure executed, the deſign of the following reflections has been anticipated by a much more maſterly hand. That gentleman has diſcovered, with ſo much energy and ſimplicity, with ſo much warmth and moderation, how the ſoul of man may derive comfort from religion, that, had the laſt diſcourſe of his *Comparative View* been preſented to me before I digeſted the enſuing reflections, I ſhould have referred the reader to that elegant and beautiful eſſay, as a more faithful interpreter of my ſentiments than I myſelf could have proved. The whole performance is calculated to refine and dignify human nature, by enumerating the various advantages of its animal, rational, and moral frame, and by ſhewing how theſe may be moſt effectually cultivated and improved, for producing the higheſt utility and entertainment to their poſſeſſors. But how is all his ſoul warmed and elevated; how are the nobleſt feelings of his heart awaked; how does his genius riſe even above itſelf, when he inculcates religion as a fruitful ſource of felicity and conſolation to the mind! Theſe obſervations would need no other apology, if I ſhould acknowledge, that they were intended as a juſt tribute of gratitude to the moſt exquiſite talents effectually exerted for the beſt and moſt ſalutary purpoſes; but to this apology I have no claim, ſince I candidly own, that my motive was not to compliment the Author, but recommend the Eſſay.

SECTION V.

NOTHING more clearly diſcovers the impaſſible limits which are aſſigned to human underſtanding, than when it explores the being and perfections of God, or the wiſdom and extent of his works. How partial and contracted are the views of truth and nature, of which our faculties are capacious in this immature and progreſſive ſtate! Our intellectual light may be clear enough to diſcover the exiſtence and reality of ſuch grand objects; but it is too faint and ambiguous to contemplate their qualities and relations, or to diſcern their ſymmetry and proportion. Hence all the doubts and difficulties which perplex our inveſtigations of the divine exiſtence, character, and government. Some truths, in their very nature, are incomprehenſible to reaſon, and muſt be conveyed to the mind by other channels of diſcovery than mere obſervation and inquiry. Theſe conſiderations ought juſtly to mortify the pride and arrogance of falſe wiſdom; they ought

ought to diſpoſe the mind for reviewing its own attainments, with a modeſt, humble, and diffident eye. Cautious of fixing principles, jealous of external appearances, open to rational conviction, ſhe ought to ſurvey herſelf, and every thing around her, with views of acquiſition and improvement.

BUT are theſe the maxims; is this the procedure of modern infidelity? Are not her pupils dark in their conceptions, prejudiced in their inquiries, limited in their views, and precipitate in their concluſions? Theſe are the ſole obſtacles, whoſe malignant interpoſition can blind the ſoul, and render her inſenſible to the luſtre of evangelical diſcoveries. Infected with a ſpiritual calenture, they behold nothing in its genuine colours; but are tempted, by falſe and illuſive proſpects, to purſue their own perdition. For ſince the exiſtence and attributes of God, the great motives that influenced him in creating the world, the plan of his procedure with his rational creatures, the laws of his moral government, the degeneracy and alienation of human nature, the pardon of ſin and

and reſtoration of man by JESUS CHRIST, the communion with God, and the ſalutary interpoſitions of his Spirit upon earth, the intricacies of providence, the general judgment, the certainty of eternal retribution, and the complete re-eſtabliſhment of order and happineſs, are placed in a light ſo advantageous by the Chriſtian diſpenſation; can we eſteem thoſe minds to be leſs than infatuated who pertinaciouſly reſiſt the united force of rational evidence?

IT is acknowledged, that we cannot deduce from principles *a priori* the eſſential facts which are contained in the hiſtory of Chriſtianity. But it is equally true, that theſe occurrences are conveyed to the human mind, and impreſſed on its faculties by the only medium through which they could paſs, which is the teſtimony of competent, faithful, and diſintereſted witneſſes. It is alſo certain, that the goſpel contains inexplicable myſteries; but ſuch as are neither inconſiſtent with reaſon, nor contradictory in themſelves. Beſides, the difficulties which occur from reaſon are more numerous and formidable than they.—Let us therefore,

with humble hearts, and docile underſtandings, receive and imbibe that wiſdom of God deſcending " from above, which is firſt pure, " then peaceable, gentle, and eaſy to be in- " treated, full of mercy and good fruits, " without partiality, and without hypocri- " ſy."

FROM our former reſearches it appears, that our attachment to happineſs is coexiſtent with our being; nor can we diveſt ourſelves of the one more than of the other. Since therefore the few enjoyments of our preſent ſtate are unſatisfactory in their nature, and precarious in their duration; ſince all the efforts of reaſon to extend her proſpect, or diſcover more ſubſtantial and permanent good, can yield us little more than favourable conjectures; is there any thing more agreeable in nature, or more conſiſtent with reaſon, than to improve thoſe lights which confirm and elevate our hopes? Whilſt we remain ſuſceptible of happineſs and miſery, whilſt the firſt is only partially enjoyed, whilſt her viſits are ſo unfrequent, and their continuance ſo momentary, in vain would Philoſophy pretend to ſecure the heart from

from trouble by all the conſolations which ſhe can dictate. It is not in mere ſpeculations, nor inactive theories, that human felicity muſt conſiſt. Happineſs is a ſucceſsful and habitual exertion of mind in the purſuit or enjoyment of its proper good. What then is the proper good of the mind, but the contemplation and attainment of perfection? and where can perfection be found, but in that eternal and infinite Mind, which is its original ſource and ultimate conſummation? It is in communion with him alone that a conſcious and rational creature can be bleſſed. Without this, all its miſeries are real and eſſential bitterneſs, all its joys illuſive and chimerical. But if the Chriſtian religion, which alone bears the ſignatures of its divine original, be fictitious, then even the exiſtence of a powerful, wiſe, and gracious Superintendant in nature becomes a ſubject of diſmal heſitation. The attributes of his eſſence, the ſpirit and rules of his conduct, the ends of his government, and the laws intended for the regulation of its ſubjects, are covered with immoveable obſcurity. All this gloom is at once diſſipated by the celeſtial radiance of

the goſpel; which ſhining at firſt with a mild and gentle luſtre, gradually diffuſes its ſplendour, till all the intellectual horizon flames with uncreated day.

"WHY, then, art thou caſt down, O my "ſoul? and why art thou diſquieted within "me? hope thou in the Lord, for I ſhall "yet praiſe him, who is the health of my "countenance, and my God." No more ſhall my heart be troubled: for as, by the works of nature, I am taught to believe in the exiſtence of one ſupreme Creator and Diſpoſer of all; ſo, by the diſcoveries of grace, I am taught to put my truſt in one Mediator, who ſhall reſtore virtue, peace, and order, through the univerſal kingdom of God.

A

LETTER

TO A

FRIEND.

A

LETTER

TO A

FRIEND,

Concerning ſome Points contained in the Laſt DISSERTATION.

DEAR SIR,

AFTER having read the Conſolation which I have attempted to deduce from Revealed Religion, which, with that of Cicero, and my remarks on both, I ſubmitted to your review, you ſtill ſeem to imagine, that it is poſſible for human wiſdom, without any ſupernatural aſſiſtance, to inveſtigate and eſtabliſh a ſyſtem of natural theology, not only ſatisfactory in itſelf, but armed

armed with ſufficient energy to regulate the conduct of mankind: ſuch a ſyſtem, you ſay, may be found in the ancient philoſophers, which, though not complete in any one, may at leaſt be collected from the whole. But, allowing your aſſertion to be true, is ſuch a ſyſtem calculated for vulgar capacity, or for the exigencies of common life? Can the peaſant or mechanic either find leiſure or opportunity, though aſſiſted with all the lights of philoſophy, to deduce for himſelf ſuch a ſeries of principles as are ſufficient in every caſe to inform his doubts, to regulate his paſſions, and to direct his behaviour? To me, however, it appears no great difficulty to prove, that your poſition is not true; and that ſo far were the philoſophers from exhibiting a refined, conſiſtent, and evident ſyſtem of natural theology, that the ſuperior lights and advantages which they poſſeſſed, had no other effect than to involve them in deeper and more impenetrable darkneſs: for though "from the viſible things "which God has made, the inviſible things "of him, even his eternal power and god-"head, may be clearly diſcernible;" yet that inveſtigation requires a mind prediſ-

poſed

poſed to acquieſce in a diſcovery founded on ſufficient evidence, without protracting its inquiries, or exploring ſuch myſteries of the divine nature as to us are inſcrutable.

THE indications of a divine Artificer and Superintendant, which reſult from the frame of the natural and moral world, are obvious and ſtriking: profound and abſtract reſearches can ſerve no other purpoſe, but to confound or efface the pleaſing and ſalutary impreſſions of wiſdom and goodneſs, which we receive from our firſt view of the conſtitution of things. Thus, "after that, "in the wiſdom of God, the world by "wiſdom knew not God, it pleaſed God "by the fooliſhneſs of preaching to ſave "them that believe." But to aſcertain this fact beyond all heſitation, if you will admit the authority of Cicero, I ſhall tranſlate a few paſſages from the introduction to his treatiſe on the nature of the Gods, and from the ſpeech of Velleius, with which the dialogue is opened.

YOU will not, I hope, fly to that common and unmeaning ſubterfuge, that Cicero was

a follower of the new academics, and in that character was not at liberty to decide. Yet, at the ſame time, his probability was no leſs convincing than the certainty of other ſects. Experience indeed will ſhew us, that the ſame principles may be attended with different degrees of conviction, as inquirers are differently prediſpoſed to receive them, or influenced by the arguments employed to ſupport them. Yet it muſt be granted, that when any tenet admits of heſitation, when any reaſonable objection can be offered againſt it, an academic may fairly maintain his ground, and affirm, that perhaps we may approach to certainty, but never can reach it. Cicero, therefore, had good reaſon to ſay, That in diſquiſitions concerning the nature of the Gods, it was much eaſier to perceive what was falſe, than what was true. The moſt ſuperficial initiate in metaphyſics will eaſily diſcover, that there is a neceſſary and inſeparable connection between the natural and moral attributes of God; and that, without preciſe and determined ideas of the former, it is impoſſible to conceive how the latter can ſubſiſt. Unleſs, for inſtance, we believe the ſpirituality, indiviſibility, and ubiquity

ubiquity of the divine Nature, his power muſt be circumſcribed, his wiſdom ſucceſſive and partial, his goodneſs limited in its operations. When therefore it appears, what idea the philoſophers entertained concerning the phyſical conſtitution of the Deity, (if you will allow me the expreſſion), we ſhall ſee upon what foundation all their fine reflections concerning his character and government proceeded.

It muſt be confeſſed, that a number of theſe reflections are admirable in themſelves; but they rather flow from traditionary hints, and the dictates of a good heart, than from rational deduction. This your candour will allow me, when you have examined what chimerical notions the moſt enlightened ſages of antiquity entertained concerning the form, ſituation, and employment of their Deity, as delineated by Velleius. It is not ſufficient to urge, that, as an Epicurean, his account muſt be diſingenuous; becauſe it was taken from manuſcripts then extant, and publicly known. Beſides, had it not been given with candour, there were great men of every capital ſect in philoſophy preſent,

who muſt have vindicated their leaders, and refuted the falſe aſſertions of their antagoniſts. But though we ſhould ſuppoſe, that ſuch an interview never happened, and that the dialogue written by Cicero is entirely imaginary; yet the ancients, in this manner of writing, never could pardon the ſmalleſt deviation from the truth of characters, nor the leaſt violation of probability. It was therefore the indiſpenſible duty of Cicero, in the character of Balbus and Cotta, to have repreſented them as clearing the philoſophers, under whoſe ſtandards they arranged themſelves, from every falſe imputation; and which, as being an academic himſelf, he would have taken care to have done.

THESE are his own words, in his addreſs to Marcus Brutus:

" As there are many things in philoſophy
" which remain till now by no means ſuffi-
" ciently illuſtrated; ſo, Brutus, it is a fact
" of which you cannot be ignorant, that
" an inquiry concerning the nature of the
" Gods is involved in great difficulty and
" obſcurity: Yet the knowledge of this is
" not

" not only one of the greateſt ornaments of
" the human mind, but abſolutely neceſſa-
" ry for the regulation of religion. Concern-
" ing this the opinions of the moſt learn-
" ed men are ſo various, and even ſo incon-
" ſiſtent, that from thence we may deduce
" a concluſive argument, that the only *data*,
" the true principle upon which philoſopy
" can proceed, is that intuitive knowledge
" which excludes all heſitation; and that, with
" great wiſdom, the academics reſtrain their
" aſſent from ſuch concluſions as were ob-
" noxious to uncertainty: For what is ſo
" culpable as raſhneſs of judgment? or what
" ſo precipitant, ſo much beneath the dig-
" nity and gravity of a wiſe man, as either
" to think falſely, or to defend, without the
" leaſt heſitation, ſuch opinions as have
" neither been examined nor eſtabliſhed with
" ſufficient accuracy and deliberation? Thus,
" in the preſent queſtion, the greateſt number
" of philoſophers have acknowledged, what
" is in itſelf extremely probable, and what,
" by the impulſe of nature, we are ſtrongly
" inclined to believe, I mean, the exiſtence
" of the Gods. Of this, however, Prota-
" goras doubted; Diagoras of Melos, and
Theodorus

" Theodorus of Cyrene, abſolutely denied it.
" Thoſe, however, who acknowledge that
" there are Gods, have adopted notions ſo
" different and inconſiſtent, that it would be
" troubleſome to recapitulate their opinions.
" For much has been ſaid concerning the
" form, the ſituation, the abode, and the
" employment of theſe Divinities; and on
" theſe topics philoſophers diſpute with the
" greateſt warmth, and moſt irreconcileable
" inconſiſtency. But the grand, the eſſen-
" tial inquiry is, Whether they are totally
" inactive, without attempting or perform-
" ing any thing? whether they are entirely
" detached from the care and adminiſtration
" of nature? or, on the contrary, whether
" things were not originally formed and
" diſpoſed by them? and whether the world,
" during its whole indefinite exiſtence, is
" not moved by their power, and ſuperin-
" tended by their wiſdom? Upon the firſt
" of theſe ſubjects, the diſcord is ſtill wider,
" and leſs capable of accommodation: yet
" unleſs this is properly decided, men muſt,
" by neceſſary conſequence, be ignorant of
" the moſt important truths, and entangled
" in the mazes of inextricable error. For

" there

" there are at preſent, and have formerly
" been, philoſophers who affirmed, that the
" Gods were entirely unconcerned in hu-
" man affairs. If their opinion be true,
" what muſt become of piety, of religion,
" and of every thing ſacred? For all theſe
" ſentiments and acts of devotion can only
" be offered to the Divinity from a pure
" and ſincere heart; becauſe we preſuppoſe
" that they are the objects of his attention,
" and that from him proceed gifts and ad-
" vantages of importance to the human race.
" But if the Gods are neither able nor wil-
" ling to aſſiſt us; if they ſurvey us with
" unmoved indifference, nor are at all con-
" cerned in what we do; if they adminiſter
" nothing comfortable, nothing uſeful to
" human life; what reaſon can be aſſigned,
" why we ſhould offer them the tribute of
" worſhip, of praiſe, or of prayer? For
" the other virtues exhibited by men may
" be counterfeited by pretence and diſſimu-
" lation: but the eſſence of piety is to be
" ſincere; which, if deſtroyed, muſt of con-
" ſequence annihilate religion, and all that
" is holy in life; and, by removing theſe,
" you introduce boundleſs anarchy and con-

" fuſion

" fuſion into the world. Nay, if you ex-
" tinguiſh piety towards the Gods, I am
" uncertain whether you would not extir-
" pate all fidelity in human intercourſe,
" break the moſt ſacred bands of ſociety,
" and baniſh from the world juſtice itſelf,
" though the moſt excellent of the virtues.
" There are, however, other philoſophers,
" and theſe too of excellent genius and diſ-
" tinguiſhed name, who think the whole
" world is governed and adminiſtered by the
" will and direction of the Gods: nor this
" alone, but likewiſe that the life of man is
" under their tuition; that they conſult its
" intereſt, and provide for its exigencies. For
" it is their opinion, that the immortal Gods
" beſtow upon the human kind both grain
" and every other neceſſary of life which the
" earth produces, with all the bleſſings which
" reſult from the ſeaſons, from the viciſſi-
" tudes of time, and from the revolutions
" of the heavenly bodies, whoſe happy in-
" fluence brings all the productions of the
" earth to proper maturity. Theſe ſages have
" collected many obſervations which are
" contained in this dialogue, which are ſo
" ſtriking, that one would imagine the im-
" mortal

" mortal Gods had framed the objects from
" whence they are drawn, ſolely for the uſe
" and accommodation of man. Againſt
" thoſe Carneades advanced ſo many ſtrong
" arguments, that by theſe, men of no in-
" active genius were excited with an ardent
" deſire of exploring the truth. For there
" is no queſtion in which the opinions not
" only of the vulgar, but even of the learn-
" ed are ſo widely different: whoſe ſenti-
" ments, as they are ſo various, and ſo pal-
" pably inconſiſtent among themſelves; on
" one hand, it is poſſible that all of them
" may be falſe; on the other, it is impoſſi-
" ble that more than one can be true."

THUS much from Cicero's introduction. Whence it appears, by his own authority, that the queſtion concerning the nature and exiſtence of the Gods was embroiled in endleſs difficulty; and that, in general, this important point remained ſtill undetermined, whether they were concerned in human affairs; or, on the contrary, whether they paſſed an eternity in that tranquil indolence deſcribed by Lucretius:

Omnis enim per ſe Divûm natura neceſſe eſt,
Immortali ævo ſummâ cum pace fruatur,
Semota ab noſtris rebus, ſejunctaque longè;
Nam privata dolore omni, privata periclis,
Ipſa ſuis pollens opibus, nihil indiga noſtri,
Nec benè promeritis capitur, nec tangitur irâ.

We ſhall therefore immediately proceed to the ſpeech of Velleius, where the various opinions mentioned by Cicero are enumerated in detail.

" Liſten, ſays he, not to ſuch fooliſh and " fictitious reveries, as that the God deſcribed by Plato, in his Timæus, was the projector and artificer of nature; or the old " prophetic female, by the Stoics called " Πρόνοια, which may be tranſlated *Providence*; or a world animated and endued " with the powers of thought and ſenſation, " a God whoſe figure is round, whoſe appearance ſplendid, and who is whirled in " one eternal eddy: theſe are the monſtrous " brood of ſuperſtition and blind aſtoniſhment; the dreams, not the diſquiſitions " of philoſophy. For with what eyes could " your favourite Plato ſurvey the complex " and laboured ſtructure of things, or deduce the plan upon which he ſays that " his

" his God has formed and diſpoſed the
" whole? What mighty efforts, what me-
" chanical inſtruments, what pullies and
" levers did he uſe? Who were his miniſters
" in a toil ſo immenſe and prodigious? In
" what manner could theſe unruly elements,
" the air, fire, and water, be reduced to o-
" bedience, and rendered obſequious to the
" will of an architect? From whence pro-
" ceeded theſe five forms, of which all the
" others are conſtituted, and which of them-
" ſelves ſo natively tend to generate a mind,
" and produce the powers of ſenſation? Long
" is the journey, and perplexed the road to
" thoſe retired truths, which are of ſuch a
" nature, as rather to be the objects of our
" wiſhes, than of our diſcovery. But this
" notion is indeed extraordinary, that he
" who had affirmed the world to be produ-
" ced in time, and almoſt formed with
" hands, ſhould again tell us, that its exiſt-
" ence is eternal. Do you think ſuch a perſon
" can be pronounced even a novice in na-
" tural philoſophy, who imagines that any
" thing which had a beginning can poſſibly
" ſubſiſt without end? For what aggregate
" is not capable of diſſolution? or what ob-

" ject can be found which is acknowledged
" to have an origin, without any boundary
" in which it terminates? But if you, Lu-
" cilius, patronize that Πρόνοια, or *Providence*,
" the ſame objections may be urged againſt
" this as formerly: What were her ma-
" chines? who her miniſters? who drew
" the entire plan of the world upon which
" ſhe operated? and what was her appara-
" tus? But if we muſt ſuppoſe another
" Creatreſs, why did ſhe form the world ca-
" pable of diſſolution? why not, like the
" God of Plato, create it eternal? From
" both I would gladly demand, why theſe
" world-builders appeared ſo late? why they
" paſſed numberleſs ages before in an inac-
" tive lethargy? For prior to the formation
" of the world, ages ſtill ſubſiſted. I do
" not here mean thoſe portions of duration
" which are meaſured by the ſucceſſion
" of days and nights, in their annual
" returns; for I grant that theſe could
" not be accompliſhed without the revolu-
" tions of the heavenly bodies: Yet there
" was from infinite duration ſomething
" which we call *eternity*, which was not
" meaſured, as now we meaſure time, by
" periods.

" periods. What ſort of continuity this
" might have been, or what its extent, we
" cannot poſſibly comprehend ; for that
" time ſhould at once be exiſtent and non-
" exiſtent, is inconceivable. During this
" immenſe ſpace, however, I aſk you, Bal-
" bus, why your *Providence* remained in
" total inaction ? Did the Lady feel herſelf
" reluctant to toil ? A ſenſe of fatigue from
" labour is incompatible with the divine
" nature ; nor was there any fatigue to be
" undergone, ſince the whole extent of nature,
" the heavens, the earth, the ſeas, would
" ſpontaneouſly obey the will of the Deity.
" But what could inſpire this Divinity with
" ſo ſtrong an inclination to adorn the
" world, like an ædile*, with torches and
" flambeaux? Was it that the place of his
" reſidence might be better and more com-
" modious ; yet for a whole eternity before
" that time he had contentedly lodged in
" darkneſs, as in a gloomy cell ? After this,
" can we imagine him amuſed by that va-
" riety with which the heavens and the
" earth are adorned ? what entertainment

* The Roman ædile ſuperintended the police of the city.

" can

" can this be to God? or, if it could, why " was he ſo long without it? Did God, as " you moſt frequently ſay, create things in " this manner for the uſe of man? Of " whom, pray? of the wiſe and good? How " few then can reap the pleaſure and advan- " tage of a work ſo complex and laborious? " Was then creative power exerted for the " fooliſh and profligate? But, in the firſt " place, there can be no reaſon aſſigned why " God ſhould endeavour to deſerve well of " the wicked: Further, what end has he " obtained, ſince the fooliſh and the bad " muſt, by theſe qualities, be rendered con- " ſummately miſerable; for what more " fruitful ſources of miſery can we conceive " than vice and folly? Beſides, there are " ſo many inconveniencies in life, that the " wiſe muſt ſooth the uneaſineſs which they " feel, by balancing its advantages in the " contrary ſcale; but fools can neither a- " void future, nor bear preſent misfor- " tunes.

" HOWEVER, thoſe who have ſaid that " the world was animated, and poſſeſſed the " powers of intelligence, have by no means " underſtood

" underſtood the nature of mind, nor in
" what form it can ſubſiſt. Of this never-
" theleſs, I ſhall ſay more afterwards. In
" the mean time, I muſt be aſtoniſhed at
" the dulneſs of thoſe who chuſe to call it
" endued with ſpirit, immortal, ſupremely
" happy, and round in its figure, becauſe
" Plato denies that any form can be more
" agreeable than this. For my own part, I
" ſhould think a cylinder, a ſquare, a cone,
" or a pyramid more beautiful. But how
" is this ſpherical Deity ſuppoſed to paſs
" his time? in whirling round with ſuch
" prodigious ſwiftneſs as exceeds imagina-
" tion? A motion in which I do not perceive
" how a tranquil intelligence, or a happy
" being can ſubſiſt. And why ſhould not
" the ſame thing which, when felt in the
" leaſt degree by our corporeal frame, gives
" us uneaſineſs, be likewiſe uneaſy and diſ-
" agreeable to this God? Now, ſince the
" earth is a part of the univerſe, it muſt
" likewiſe be a part of the Deity: but we
" ſee vaſt regions of the earth uninhabitable
" and uncultivated; becauſe ſome of them
" are ſcorched by the near approach of the
" ſun, others ſtiffened with froſt and ſnow,

" by

" by its great diſtance. And ſince the uni-
" verſe is God, as theſe are parts of the u-
" niverſe, we muſt ſay, that ſome members
" of the Deity are burning hot, others be-
" numbed with cold.

" THESE, Lucilius, are the ſentiments of
" your ſect: what thoſe of the other philo-
" ſophers are, we ſhall ſee, by tracing them
" from the earlieſt of the ancients. For
" Thales the Mileſian, who firſt inquired in-
" to theſe ſubjects, thought water the firſt
" principle of things, and God the intelli-
" gence which formed every thing from
" that element. If the Gods can exiſt with-
" out the powers of thought and ſenſation,
" why unite them with water? If, on the
" contrary, mind can ſubſiſt without body,
" why ſuppoſe any thing corporeal neceſſa-
" ry to it? It was the opinion of Anaxi-
" mander, that Gods were generated, emer-
" ging to exiſtence, and departing from it,
" by long intervals; and that there were
" innumerable worlds. But how can we
" conceive a God whoſe exiſtence is not
" from eternity to eternity? After him A-
" naximenes aſſerted the air to be God; that
" he

" he was produced; that he was infinite,
" immenſe, and in perpetual motion: as if
" air, without any determined figure, could
" be God; ſince God, in particular, ought
" not only to have ſome form, but even the
" moſt beautiful: or as if any thing which
" could be generated, was not likewiſe ob-
" noxious to corruption. Then Anaxago-
" ras, who received his doctrine from Ana-
" ximenes, firſt determined that the whole
" plan, and all the revolutions of things,
" were deſigned and accompliſhed by the
" power and counſels of an infinite Mind.
" In this he did not perceive, that no
" motion * can ſubſiſt in any infinite ſubject,
" intimately connected with ſenſe; and that
" no ſenſation could be felt by ſuch a ſub-
" ject, which was not at the ſame inſtant
" impreſſed on all the parts of nature.
" Moreover, if he thought that this mind
" was a kind of animal, there muſt be ſome
" internal principle, ſome eſſence, which
" conſtitutes it what it is; but what princi-
" ple can be more eſſential, more internal,

* Senſation ſeems to preſuppoſe corporeal organs, which can neither be infinite, nor exert a power of infinite motion.

" than mind itſelf? Let us therefore clothe
" it in corporeal and external organs. But
" if this ſuppoſition be diſagreeable, a pure
" and unimbodied intelligence, not joined
" with any medium by which ſenſible per-
" ception can be conveyed, to me appears
" inconceivable, even by the higheſt efforts
" of underſtanding. But Alcmæon the Cro-
" tonean, who aſcribed divinity to the ſun,
" the moon, and other ſtars, as well as to
" the mind, did not conſider, that he in-
" veſted things, mortal in their own na-
" ture, with immortality. Pythagoras too,
" who imagined, that a ſoul was mixed with,
" and diffuſed through the whole maſs of
" things, from which human intelligences
" were extracted, did not reflect that, by
" the extraction of theſe intelligences, his
" God muſt be dilacerated, and torn in
" pieces; and that when ſuch intelligences
" were affected with miſery, which the
" greateſt number of them muſt at ſome
" time feel, then a part of the divine mind
" muſt be miſerable, which cannot poſſibly
" happen. But why ſhould the ſoul of man
" be ignorant of any thing, if it be a God?
" or how ſhould that God, if he be nothing

" but

" but an univerſal mind, be connected or
" mixed with the univerſe? Likewiſe Xe-
" nophanes, who imagined that, joined with
" a mind, every thing elſe to which infi-
" nity could be attributed, was God, may
" be refuted by the ſame arguments with
" other philoſophers who unite their corpo-
" real divinity with intelligence; but on
" him they fall with ſtill greater weight,
" as he ſuppoſes the whole to be infinite, in
" which nothing capable of ſenſation or ac-
" ceſſion can ſubſiſt. Parmenides invented a
" ſort of extraordinary figment, in the form
" of a crown or garland, which he called
" Στέφανη, circumſcribing the univerſe with
" a blaze of light, which ſurrounds the hea-
" vens, and which he terms GOD; but in
" this no mortal can trace either the form or
" ſenſibility which are ſuitable to the divine
" nature. The ſame extravagant philoſo-
" pher likewiſe deifies a thouſand mon-
" ſtrous chimeras, ſuch as War, Diſcord,
" Deſire, and other phantoms of the ſame
" kind, which are obliterated by diſeaſe,
" by ſleep, by forgetfulneſs, or even by
" a long courſe of time. The ſame refuta-
" tions which we applied to others who a-

" ſcribe godhead even to the conſtellations,
" though they are likewiſe againſt him,
" ſhall not be recapitulated. As for Empe-
" docles, whoſe miſtakes in other things are
" egregious and frequent, in his notions of
" the Gods his error is ſhameful and pal-
" pable. For he thinks the four elements, of
" which, according to him, all things ſub-
" ſiſt, are Gods: but that theſe are capable
" of production and annihilation, that they
" are void of all conſciouſneſs, we may clear-
" ly perceive. Nor does Protagoras ſeem to
" have formed any idea of the divine nature,
" who tells us, that concerning the Gods he
" knows nothing diſtinct or certain, whe-
" ther they exiſt or not, nor what ſort of be-
" ings they are. What ſhall we ſay of De-
" mocrites, who attributes divinity to the
" images of objects which ſtrike us, to that
" nature from whence theſe images proceed,
" and to that knowledge, that improvement
" of underſtanding which we derive from
" them? are not theſe tenets involved in
" endleſs error? As the ſame philoſopher
" abſolutely denies that any thing can be e-
" ternal, ſince nothing remains fixed in any
" one ſtate, does he not by this means en-

" tirely

" tirely extirpate his divinity, ſo that all his
" former opinions are rendered void? What
" of the air, which by Diogenes the Apol-
" lonian is acknowledged to be God? What
" conſciouſneſs, or what forms does it poſ-
" ſeſs? from whence we can aſcertain its di-
" vinity? It would be tedious to enumerate
" the inconſiſtencies of Plato, who, in his
" Timæus, tells us, that the Father of this
" world cannot be named; in his books
" concerning laws, thinks we ought by no
" means to inquire what God is. His aſ-
" ſertion, that God can be without a body,
" or, as the Greeks ſay †, incorporeal, is
" quite unintelligible: for ſuch a God muſt
" neceſſarily be without ſenſation, without
" wiſdom, without agreeable perceptions, all
" which are included in the notion of God-
" head. The ſame perſon ſays, both in his Ti-
" mæus and in his Laws, that the world is a
" God, and the heavens, and the ſtars, and the
" earth, and human minds, and thoſe whom
" we receive as ſuch by the inſtitutions of our
" anceſtors; which in themſelves are plainly
" falſe and inconſiſtent one with another. And

† Ἀσώματον.

" likewiſe

" likewiſe Xenophon is guilty almoſt of the
" ſame errors, but in fewer words: for in
" theſe converſations of Socrates, which he
" repeats, that philoſopher is repreſented
" aſſerting, that the form of God is not an
" object of our inquiry; afterwards as call-
" ing the ſun and the human mind Divi-
" nities; and ſometimes acknowledging one,
" ſometimes more Gods; which are almoſt
" the ſame errors juſt mentioned in Plato.
" Antiſthenes too, in his treatiſe on natural
" philoſophy, admits a number of Gods
" worſhipped by the populace, yet acknow-
" ledges only one true Deity in nature, and,
" by thus dividing the Godhead, deſtroys
" the power and ſimplicity of its eſſence.
" Nor is Speuſippus much different; affirm-
" ing, that there is a certain force by which
" all things are governed, and that this is
" an animal. In this manner, he endea-
" vours to eradicate from the mind all
" knowledge of the Gods. Ariſtotle, in his
" third book of philoſophy, gives his ſenti-
" ments with no leſs confuſion, but faith-
" fully follows his maſter Plato: for ſome-
" times he attributes all the powers of divi-
" nity to mind; ſometimes he calls the world

" a God; ſometimes he ſpeaks of another
" ſuperintendant, to whom he aſſigns the
" office of preſerving and governing the
" world by a certain revolving motion. A-
" gain, he calls the ſplendour of heaven a
" God; not reflecting that heaven is a part
" of the univerſe, which in another place he
" ſtyles a God. But how can the heavens,
" carried on with ſuch rapidity, retain that
" ſerene conſciouſneſs which we attribute to
" the Deity. Where then ſhall we find ha-
" bitations for ſuch a number of Gods, if
" heaven be one? But ſince the ſame philo-
" ſopher deprives his God of a body, he
" muſt likewiſe rob him of all ſenſation and
" wiſdom. Beſides, by what means can he
" move the world, ſince he wants a body?
" or how preſerve his own tranquillity and
" happineſs, ſince he himſelf is in continual
" rotation? Nor was his fellow-pupil Xeno-
" crates more enlightened on this ſubject:
" for he has aſſigned no figure to the Gods,
" in his books wrote concerning their na-
" ture; but contented himſelf with inform-
" ing us, that they are eight in number.
" Five of theſe he aſſigns to the planets; one
" he collects from all the fixed ſtars: as if

" the

" the ſimplicity of a divine eſſence could
" ſubſiſt in ſo many ſcattered members. He
" adds the ſun as a ſeventh; and the moon
" completes the number. But in what ſenſe
" theſe may be called happy, no mortal can
" underſtand. Heraclides of Pontus, from the
" ſame Platonic ſchool, has filled his books
" with childiſh fables: yet at one time he
" thinks the world, at another the mind a
" Divinity. He likewiſe attributes divinity
" to the planets, denies that God is conſci-
" ous, and thinks his form changeable. A-
" gain, in the ſame book, he enumerates the
" earth and heavens amongſt the Gods.
" Nor is the inconſtancy of Theophraſtus
" ſupportable; for at one time he attributes
" divine ſovereignty to the mind, at an-
" other to heaven, and again to the conſtel-
" lations and planets. Nor can we liſten
" with patience to his pupil Strato, who is
" called the *Phyſiologiſt*; who thinks the
" whole power of the Godhead is placed in
" nature, which contains the cauſes of pro-
" duction, augmentation, and diminution,
" but is void of all form and conſciouſneſs.
" But Zeno (for now, Balbus, I come to the
" ſect which you acknowledge) thought the

" law

" law of nature divine, and that it poſſeſſed
" a power of enjoining what was juſt and
" proper, and forbidding their contraries.
" But how he endues this law with body
" and ſpirit, we cannot underſtand; yet we
" certainly allow that God is an animated
" being. And the ſame philoſoper, in an-
" other place, calls the æther God; if that
" can be conceived a God, which feels no-
" thing, which never is propitious to us,
" neither for prayers, nor ſupplications, nor
" vows. Elſewhere he tells us, that there
" is a certain reaſon diffuſed through all
" nature, which he thinks inveſted with all
" the powers of divinity. The ſame com-
" pliment he pays to the ſtars, to months,
" to years, and their revolutions: For when
" he interprets the Theogony of Heſiod, he
" totally denies all the received and eſta-
" bliſhed notions of the Gods: nor will he
" admit amongſt the number of the Gods,
" either Jupiter, Juno, Veſta, or any to
" whom theſe deſignations may be given;
" but thinks theſe appellations beſtowed up-
" on certain mute and inanimate things by
" a ſort of alluſion. His diſciple Ariſto is
" no leſs erroneous in his opinion, who nei-

" ther thinks the form of the Gods can be
" underſtood, nor allows them to be con-
" ſcious; nay, he is extremely doubtful
" whether God is a living being or not.
" Cleanthes †, who attended the leſſons of
" Zeno at the ſame time with him I laſt
" named, not only ſays that the world is a
" God, but gives the ſame denomination to
" the ſoul and intelligence of all nature; and
" he judges that effulgence, which we call
" *æther*, which is the higheſt, the laſt, every
" where circumfuſed, the moſt remote, ſur-
" rounding and embracing all things, un-
" queſtionably a Divinity. The ſame au-
" thor, as if affected with a delirium, in
" thoſe books which he wrote againſt plea-
" ſure, in one place imagines a kind of form
" and appearance belonging to the Gods;
" in another, aſcribes all divinity to the
" ſtars; laſtly, thinks nothing more divine
" than intelligence. Thus it happens, that
" the God whom we recogniſe in our own
" minds, and whom we would preſerve in

† The poetical hymn of this philoſopher to Jupiter is quoted in the Conſolation; and, if we change the names, might be eſteemed almoſt truly evangelical.

" the

" the idea of our underſtanding, which is
" the impreſſion of his nature, no where
" appears. But Perſeus, a diſciple of the
" ſame Zeno, tells us, that thoſe were e-
" ſteemed Gods by whom any arts and in-
" ſtruments of great importance to human
" life were invented, and that ſuch things
" as are uſeful or ſalutary, were called by
" the names of Gods; ſo that, in his opinion,
" they are not the inventions of the Deities,
" but themſelves divine. Now, what can
" be more abſurd than to dignify with di-
" vine honours ſuch things as are baſe
" and deformed; or to deify men long ago
" removed by death, who could no other
" way be worſhipped with propriety, unleſs
" in groans and tears? But later than theſe,
" Chryſippus, who is reckoned the moſt ſub-
" tile interpreter of the Stoical viſions, col-
" lects an immenſe multitude of unknown
" Gods; and indeed ſo totally unknown,
" that we can form no notion of them, even
" by conjecture, though it ſeems poſſible
" for the human mind to conceive every
" thing; for he ſays, that the divine power
" conſiſts in reaſon, and in that ſoul and
" intelligence which animates univerſal na-

" ture. He likewiſe calls the world and
" its intelligence, which, according to him,
" is univerſally diffuſed, each a God: a-
" gain, that dominion which it exerciſes
" by virtue of conſciouſneſs and reaſon,
" and that principle which is common
" to the nature of things, comprehend-
" ing the univerſal whole: again, that ſha-
" dowy being named *Deſtiny*, and the ne-
" ceſſity of certain effects from their pecu-
" liar cauſes: beſides theſe, fire and æther,
" which I have juſt before mentioned: more-
" over, both ſuch things as were by their
" nature fluid, and in perpetual agitation,
" as water, earth, air; the ſun, the moon,
" the ſtars, and the univerſal aggregate of
" things, in which are included all the parts
" of nature; and likewiſe thoſe men who
" had attained immortality. The ſame per-
" ſon maintains, that the æther is he whom
" men call Jupiter; and that air, which is
" extended and mixed with the ſea, Nep-
" tune; the earth, Ceres. In the ſame man-
" ner, he explains the names of the other
" Gods. This very writer calls the force of
" the eternal and immutable law, which is
" as it were the guide of life, and the ſource
" of duty, Jupiter; the ſame thing he calls

" too

" too fatal neceſſity, and the eternal truth
" of things to come: Of all which there is
" nothing which ſeems to comprehend the
" idea of divinity. This account he has
" given in his firſt book concerning the na-
" ture of the Gods; in the ſecond, he la-
" bours to accommodate the fables of Or-
" pheus, Muſæus, Heſiod, and Homer, to
" the deſcriptions which he has given of
" the immortal Gods in the former: ſo that
" the moſt ancient poets, who never dreamed
" of ſuch a thing, might appear Stoics.
" Him Diogenes the Babylonian follow-
" ing, in that book which is entitled *Miner-*
" *va*, transferring the birth of Jove and
" the origin of the virgin Goddeſs to natu-
" ral philoſophy, metamorphoſes the ſtory
" from a fable to an allegory. Thus far I
" have laid before you, what may be rather
" called the dreams of madmen, than the o-
" pinions of philoſophers."

VELLEIUS then proceeds to the fictions of the poets, the Magi, and the Egyptians, that from thence he may take an opportunity to introduce a panegyric on his maſter. But, after all, the ſentiments of Epicurus were not

not leſs abſurd than any of the former; for he only acknowledged the Gods, that he might be free from the imputation of atheiſm; a character then unpopular and odious. His Gods were neither concerned in the formation nor government of nature; their form was human, becauſe they muſt have had ſome figure, and none could be more beautiful: yet they had no blood, but ſomething like blood; no body, but ſomething like one.

SUCH, my dear Sir, was the ſtate of philoſophical theology from the earlieſt records of learning to the times of Cicero. Eternally embarraſſed with matter and motion, the labouring mind could neither, by its utmoſt efforts, form an idea of the Deity abſtracted from theſe, nor ſuppoſe them united with him. It was a bold aſſertion to pronounce him incorporeal; becauſe it ſeemed then unaccountable by what means he formed and regulated this complex frame of things. Beſides, how could an immaterial exiſtence be ſuppoſed capable of ſenſation, without theſe mediums that convey ſuch perceptions to our minds? The other alternative was not

not more eligible; for a material Divinity muſt, by its very nature, be diſcerptible and circumſcribed, ſince all bodies within our knowledge have dimenſions. An infinite mind united with matter, as the human ſoul with the body, muſt, from that conjunction, be ſuſceptible of pleaſing or painful impreſſions, and conſequently paſſive in the ſame degree. This was the cauſe why Epicurus and his followers, who ſeemed to have placed their ſupreme good in the abſence of pain and uneaſineſs, eſtabliſhed their Divinities in a calm receſs, widely diſtant from us and our affairs. Even thoſe who had ſome dark and perplexed ideas of an immaterial being, ſeemed to have expreſſed their ſenſe of the matter with much timidity and confuſion. It will, I think, be acknowledged, that Greece and Rome were the moſt enlightened nations in the world; that they were not only indefatigable in purſuit of diſcoveries by the exertions of their own underſtanding, but anxious in their induſtry to collect whatever might facilitate their improvement from others. In that diſtinguiſhed period when Cicero reſigned himſelf wholly to retirement and philoſophy, the world had probably

probably ſubſiſted four thouſand years. Now, ſince during that immenſe ſeries of time, the wiſeſt of men had obtained no juſter notions of God and religion, what preſumptive argument can be urged, that in any future period their inquiries would have been more ſucceſsful? Or though, in complaiſance to the antagoniſts of Chriſtianity, we ſhould ſuppoſe an event, which univerſal experience from the birth of time contradicts; yet how could theſe diſtinguiſhed ſages propagate and eſtabliſh their opinions in ſuch a manner, as to become powerful and univerſal principles of action? In effect, there never was nor ever will be found a religion invented and eſtabliſhed by philoſophy. The modes of faith and worſhip which, till the Chriſtian æra, obtained credit in the Gentile world, were either the reſult of tradition, accident, ſuperſtition, or ſacerdotal policy. Whence elſe could they proceed? Since theſe noble enthuſiaſts in favour of nature, who ſo warmly aſſerted the beauty of her frame, the wiſdom and munificence of her laws, when ſeverely preſſed with the evils and diſorders of human life, were forced to make the moſt graceful

graceful retreat in their power, by urging ſuppoſitions for arguments, and conjecture for demonſtration. Of all the ſages who imbibed this ſpirit of philoſophical gallantry, it ſeems to glow with the moſt intenſe warmth and brighteſt luſtre in Plato amongſt the ancients, and in Shafteſbury amongſt the moderns. And how have theſe inamoratos attempted to diffuſe their paſſion, and recommend their goddeſs to our affections? If we objected againſt any particular evil, their anſwer was prepared; "Pray, gentlemen, be contented; learn to make a virtue "of neceſſity: If you were freed from the "preſent inconveniency, a thouſand others "more grievous and inſupportable muſt follow. Beſides, you are no more than a part "of your own ſubordinate ſyſtem, and that "itſelf is but an inconſiderable part of the "ſpacious univerſe. When this dawn, this "infancy of your progreſſive being is over, "golden times, halcyon days ſhall ſucceed." But Theocles and his maſter have made no new diſcovery, when they inform us, that the removal of one evil may be productive of greater and more numerous diſtreſſes than that which we deplore. Still

we aſk, why things were ſo conſtituted as to render this miſerable alternative neceſſary? That there is a ſubordination of beings and intereſts in this world, and that particular muſt yield to general good, I grant; but what hoſtile principle in nature produced this unhappy competition? Why might not all beings enjoy equal independence and felicity? Suppoſing, however, that the veſtiges of a connexion, formed by the ſubordination of parts, could be traced through the whole planetary ſyſtem, what authority have I to carry the ſame idea beyond it? Analogy will no longer conduct my wandering ſteps: its light was indeed ambiguous and uncertain whilſt it remained, but now all is darkneſs and ſolitude; fancy and hypotheſis muſt ſupply the reſt. But with theſe weak and irreſolute auxiliaries, how ſhall I maintain my ground againſt Voltaire's Optimiſt and Micro-Megas? I tremble for the cataſtrophe. It would be tedious and unneceſſary to recapitulate my expoſtulations with ſuch philoſophers as attempt to prove human immortality without the aſſiſtance of revelation. Theſe you have already ſeen in the foregoing treatiſe.

In a word: If we would conſult our own happineſs; if we would be reconciled with the conſtitution and adminiſtration of nature; if we would promote the nobleſt ends of our being; let us embrace that ſyſtem of divine truth which alone can put us in poſſeſſion of wiſdom, perfection, and felicity. I am,

Dear Sir,

With the higheſt eſteem,

Your moſt obedient humble ſervant.

MVSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM